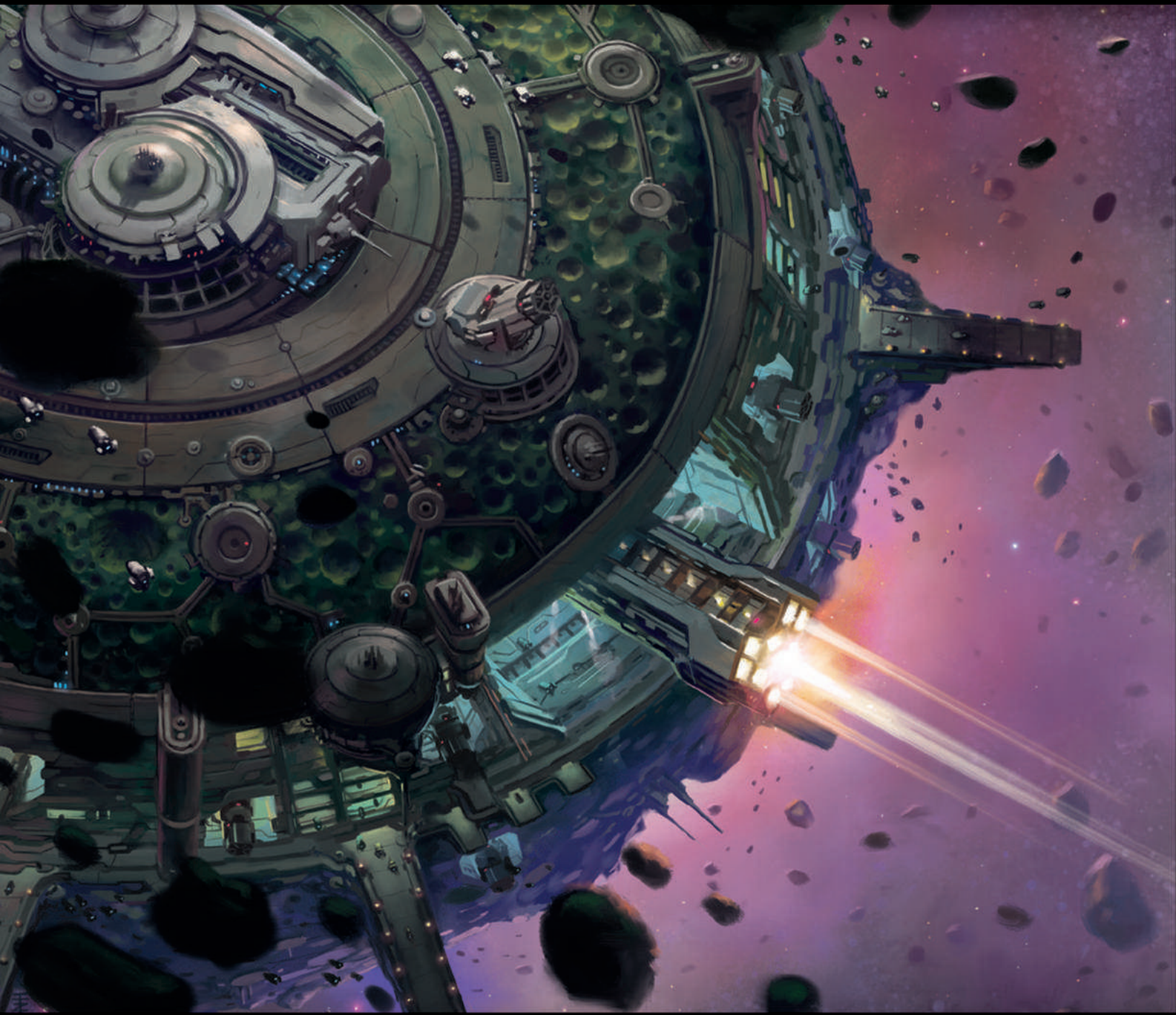


TRAVELLER

DEEPNIGHT REVELATION
THE NEAR SIDE OF YONDER



SCIENCE FICTION ADVENTURE IN THE FAR FUTURE

TRAVELLER

DEEP NIGHT REVELATION NEAR SIDE OF YONDER

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T R A V E L L E R INTRODUCTION

The Near Side of Yonder is the second expansion for the *Deepnight Revelation* campaign. The Travellers have left Charted Space far behind and voyaged along the coreward edge of the Great Rift to reach Point NSY-X. Beyond lies the Near Side of Yonder, a region of around six sectors lying along the fringe of the rift. The Travellers' mission here is to seek a crossing point. If one cannot be located, *Deepnight Revelation* will need to detour around a projection of the Great Rift and proceed along its far shore. This will add years to the expedition.

The NSY region therefore requires closer inspection than the sectors passed through during *The Riftsedge Transit*. The extra time required will be more than worth it if a crossing can be found. There are secondary objectives to be investigated, if possible, but for the most part it was projected that *Deepnight Revelation* would proceed along the fringe of the rift.

The search for a crossing point will eventually prove fruitful but there are complications. The projected crossing lies in a region disputed by three emerging starfaring cultures. None is concerned with the crossing itself but all seek whatever advantages can be gained from controlling something the Travellers want. Ultimately, *Deepnight Revelation* will have to chart a path through murky political waters in order to continue her voyage.

THE NEAR SIDE OF YONDER

The NSY region consists of the six sectors directly spinward of Point NSY-X, plus the sectors immediately coreward and trailing of them. The spinward boundary of the region is a projection of the Great Rift in the shape of a hook, which has been informally named Greenwald's Bay by the mission planners. The Bay is a significant obstacle; if *Deepnight Revelation* reaches it without finding a crossing to rimward on the main body of the rift, the Travellers will have to choose whether to double back and keep searching, attempt a crossing of the Bay, or make a long detour to coreward and go around it.

A simple transit of the six NSY sectors could be undertaken in around 18 months but if a crossing is to be found, the expedition will need to slow down and

THE UNCHARTED GAP

The sector-wide region between Near Side of Yonder sector and the NSY region has been left unmapped to allow the Referee to slide the regions covered in *The Riftsedge Transit* and *The Near Side of Yonder* around a little if necessary. Crossing this region could be a simple fast transit or the Referee could insert further adventures there. The Travellers may provoke a few incidents of their own on the way.

If the Referee prefers, the 'empty column' of sectors on the map can be glossed over or the two regions can be assumed to butt up against one another. However, the nature of the campaign is such that gaps between the mapped areas are necessary to allow the Referee to slide the pre-prepared elements into the right place. In other words there is a gap between Point NSY-X, which marks the entry to the NSY region, and the Near Side of Yonder itself to help the Referee ensure the Travellers encounter the best elements of the campaign. It is necessary in the official materials but in your campaign it does not have to be there at all.

undertake long-range scanning. It is entirely possible *Deepnight Revelation* will spend a year or more in the spinward-rimward corner of the Near Side of Yonder, time well spent if the expedition can get across the Great Rift and avoid the long slog around the far side.

As with the sectors of *The Riftsedge Transit*, the expedition's planners have assigned temporary designations to the sectors *Deepnight Revelation* may pass through or produce detailed charts of. These may or may not become 'official' and any names assigned to locations by the crew may eventually find their way into the navigational databases. The names assigned are, for the most part, less imaginative than those of the previous transit, with the occasional foray into whimsicality.

WHAT IF THEY DON'T...?

Unless an adventure is written in an extremely railroad manner – and sometimes even then – the question ‘what if they don’t?’ has to be addressed. What if the Travellers decide not to look for a crossing point but just bite the bullet and make the long transit? What if they give up looking for one or cannot find a solution to the local political situation they can stomach?

The Referee has a few ways to nudge the adventure back onto the projected path if that is desirable. The Travellers cannot micromanage the activities of every single person aboard *Deepnight Revelation*, so there is always the possibility that some of the Mission Division might locate a suitable crossing point on their own initiative. However, the Travellers have complete agency in this campaign. That means they are free to choose what to do and what not to do. If they do not want to search for a crossing point in *The Near Side of Yonder*, so be it.

The campaign does not detail every star system between Charted Space and Terminus Point, nor does it precisely locate any given incident. Adventures that detail a few star systems can be dropped in wherever the Referee wants them, and this applies also to the larger region covered by this adventure. The ability to subtly move adventure locations to where the Travellers will find them reduces the chances the Travelers will blunder past, missing a major component of the campaign because they became distracted by something shiny.

If the Travellers decide to bypass the main adventure location, the Referee can relocate the three enclaves

and drop them into the Travellers’ path at a later date. If this is necessary, it is best if the Travellers do not realise they are entering an inhabited region until they are deep within it. That way they cannot evade the adventure a second time! They can, of course, simply ignore anything they do not want to deal with and dash off with a series of four-parsec jumps. To deny the Travellers the right to invoke what might be called the ‘Power of Nope’ would be to rob the campaign of much of its meaning. After all, the whole point of the game is that the Travellers will make their own decisions and must deal with the consequences.

However, once the Travellers realise they are in the middle of something they are likely to remain involved. There will be pressure from their crew to investigate, obtain spares and supplies, or win over one of the alien cultures so the ship, and her crew can have a proper rest for a few weeks. Crewmembers will also have opinions on what the correct, most effective, or ‘right’, course of action should be and it is unlikely everyone will agree on any of them.

The opinions of the crew, and the damage to morale caused by an unpopular decision, can be used by a wise Referee to nudge the Travellers in the right direction and get them involved in situations they might otherwise choose to avoid. It is worth establishing as early as possible that the Travellers cannot simply issue edicts to their robot-like subordinates. Well... they can if they want to but it will have consequences. Once the Travellers have had to dig their way out of a hole of their own making a few times they should become a lot more respectful of crew morale and mindful of the effects upon it when they make a decision that proves unpopular.

Coreward Shore

Coreward Shore sector lies coreward of the astrographical centre of Greenwald’s Bay. About half the sector lies within the Bay, whilst the other half displays increasing stellar density to coreward. If a crossing point on the Great Rift cannot be found, *Deepnight Revelation* will have to pass through this sector before swinging rimward. Thus the Coreward Shore represents a potential major landmark in the expedition, although one the crew would prefer not to visit at all.

Greenwald’s Beach

Greenwald’s Beach is one of a number of features labelled by Sabine Greenwald, an astrographer of no great distinction who handled much of the routine

plotting and labelling for this part of the expedition. Left largely to her own devices during the early planning phases, Greenwald took the liberty of naming regions and objects after herself and mythological figures who interested her. Greenwald’s Bay is a prominent feature of the Great Rift, variously described as a projection or spur. The ‘beach’ in this case is about half rift, with stellar density increasing slowly in what Greenwald described as a gentle slope rising to coreward.

Narrow Transit

The Narrow Transit is mostly rift, with a few star systems scattered across the middle of the sector. A strip of greater stellar density runs across the sector towards the coreward end, with another region of low system density beyond it before the rift truly ends.

NEAR SIDE OF YONDER

COREWARD

	COREWARD SHORE			GREENWALD'S BEACH				NARROW TRANSIT			SISYPHUS ULTERIOR			
	CENTRAL BAY			FAR SHORE OF YONDER				COLAEUS			SISYPHUS CITERIOR			
SPINWARD	GREENWALD'S BAY													
	OPEN RIFT			LAST PROSPECT				BEST PROSPECT			NO PROSPECT			
						GREENWALD'S BAY MOUTH								

RIMWARD

THE GREAT RIFT

COREWARD													
PYTHEUS INTERIOR		IDIRDA		KAALIN ULTERIOR		UNCHARTED GAP		NEAR SIDE OF YONDER					
PYTHEAS		DIAMOND SCATTER		KAALIN CITERIOR		UNCHARTED GAP		FIRST PROSPECT					
		WHITE STARS											TRAILING
								THE GREAT RIFT					
BLACK NIGHT		FEW GLIMMERS		JUST EMPTY		UNCHARTED GAP							
		THE GREAT RIFT											
RIMWARD													

Sisyphus Ulterior

Sisyphus Ulterior is named for a figure in ancient Greek mythology, who was sentenced by the gods to endlessly roll a boulder up a hill. It would, of course, roll down again once he reached the top, making his existence one of endless labour without hope of success. It is not clear whether Sabine Greenwald was referring to the probable state of mind aboard *Deepnight Revelation* or her own gargantuan task when she chose this name. The sector has normal stellar density but beyond that little is known.

Pytheus Inferior

Pytheus was an ancient Greek mariner said to have sailed out of the Mediterranean by way of the Straits of Gibraltar and explored as far as the British Isles and Scandinavia. The 'Inferior' designation probably refers to the fact that this sector displays relatively low stellar density – although it is not a rift sector as such – and a high proportion of those stars it does have are unremarkable red dwarfs.

Idirda

Idirda was an ancient Vilani explorer, probably mythical, who is said to have established the correct and proper procedures for mapping a region. Some planetside cartographic operations are still referred to as Idirda Protocols. The sector appears to be relatively normal in terms of stellar density and composition.

Kaaliin Ulterior

Named for Irinukii Kaaliin, leader of a Vilani expedition that fled spinward away from the collapsing First Imperium, Kaaliin Ulterior is a typical sector in terms of stellar density, although its systems are unusually clumpy rather than forming small clusters and mains. The mission planners did not expect *Deepnight Revelation* to enter this sector unless a detour was necessary.

Central Bay

Central Bay is named as the midpoint of Greenwald's Bay, although exactly where the Bay ends and the Great Rift begins is open to debate. The sector is not known to contain any stellar bodies, although closer inspection may reveal some.

Far Shore of Yonder

The Far Shore of Yonder sector is the end point of the NSY region. This sector is mostly rift, lying within Greenwald's Bay, but has some relatively dense stellar clusters along its trailing fringe. It is significant as a possible jumping-off point for a transit of Greenwald's Bay, although it is hoped a crossing to rimward can be found that will make this unnecessary.

Colaesus

Colaesus was an ancient Greek explorer who found new trade opportunities after being blown off course – he claimed – by a storm. The sector was named in a spirit of hope, although crewmembers may fixate on the tale of the storm and dislike the name. It is probable that *Deepnight Revelation* will visit only the rimward edge of this sector, proceeding into Best Prospect to seek a crossing point.

Sisyphus Citerior

Sisyphus Citerior sector has normal stellar density in its coreward half, gradually dropping to almost zero along the edge of the Great Rift. It is expected that *Deepnight Revelation* will explore this sector in search of a crossing point.

Pytheas

The Pytheas sector has unusually high stellar density for a region so close to the Great Rift. A central belt across the sector, almost two subsectors wide, qualifies as Dense. The edge of the Great Rift is sharp and abrupt, running across the rimwardmost subsectors.

Diamond Scatter

The Diamond Scatter sector is in some ways a typical rift-edge sector, with low stellar density in the centre and rimward ends of the sector, increasing towards the other edges of the sector. Its name is derived from the fact that it contains a number of bright white stars.

Kaaliin Citerior

Kaaliin Citerior lies on the likely expedition route after visiting point NSY-X. The sector lies on the fringe of the Great Rift, with stellar density increasing in the mid and coreward subsectors.

Last Prospect

Last Prospect is one of two sectors whose star systems form a promontory extending out into the Great Rift and forming the mouth of Greenwald's Bay. A route across the rift to rimward might be found here, although is deemed unlikely, or a transit across the Bay might be attempted. If neither of these options prove possible, *Deepnight Revelation* will need to detour round the Bay. This sector is the last prospect for a chance to avoid this.

Best Prospect

Best Prospect is, as the name suggests, the most likely candidate for a route across the Great Rift. It is possible *Deepnight Revelation* will head directly for this sector, although doing so means that if a crossing point is not found the expedition will have to backtrack along the



rift fringe or accept the necessity of transit around Greenwald's Bay. A steady cruise along the rift fringe offers a greater chance of finding a crossing point without backtracking, although there are arguments in favour of rushing to Best Prospect first.

No Prospect

No Prospect is named for its complete lack of star systems. However, the name is a little misleading; it is possible that deep space comets or even brown dwarf star systems could be detected in suitable locations to permit refuelling during a crossing. This would require a transit of Sisyphus Citerior with frequent stops to conduct long-range scanning of No Prospect.

Black Night

Black Night is a typical rift sector, with a handful of lonely star systems widely separated from one another. The mission's planners predict a small chance of finding

a crossing route by scanning from Pytheas or jumping out into the rift to one of the isolated systems and searching from there.

Few Glimmers

Like Black Night, Few Glimmers has only a handful of stars. There is a curious grouping of three brown dwarf systems in the middle of the sector, which could form part of a crossing route. Reaching them would require finding refuelling sources in the midrift, which might prove possible by scanning from Diamond Scatter.

Just Empty

Just Empty sector is, as far as can be discerned by the best instruments in Charted Space, void of star systems. It may be that closer inspection indicates systems present but this will not be possible until the expectation reaches Kaaliin Citerior or First Prospect.

C H A P T E R O N E

REFEREE'S INFORMATION

The Near Side of Yonder differs from *The Riftsedge Transit* in a number of ways, although there are many similarities. The preceding expansion book focussed on the progress of the expedition through a series of challenges and adventures. In *The Near Side of Yonder* the expedition will still need to make the same sort of transit but the focus is on activities in a smaller area of space. *Deepnight Revelation* may spend considerable time in this region, moving back and forth between territories of local powers and conducting side missions that do not directly progress the expedition but which may be necessary to its continuation. Where there is a transit to be made, the Referee should already be familiar with the processes involved from *The Riftsedge Transit*.

The main adventure in this expansion concerns tensions between three minor powers in the region, two of them of the same species. All have come under attack from an unknown fourth party and blamed one another. Conflict has thus far been limited to raids and skirmishes as none of the powers has the ability to bring an interstellar war to a successful conclusion but the situation is escalating as technology improves. *Deepnight Revelation* has the firepower to overcome this enemy on behalf of any of the local powers, or all of them. However, any choices the Travellers make will inevitably have major consequences.

If the Travellers choose not to get involved in local affairs, it is probable that they will never find out what happens to the emerging starfaring culture of this region. If the campaign ends with a time dilation trip into the future the crew might witness the fallout from their decisions. If not, they may blithely go on their way without having to face the consequences of their decisions. So be it; if there is no way to plausibly show the Travellers what will happen after they leave, the Referee cannot do so. However, the Mission Division staff may be able to put together a projection of what is likely to happen, based on data they have. If the Travellers show any interest the staff will prepare this projection and they may do so anyway in order to make a point. The Travellers might one day receive a polite request to view a presentation, only to find their advisors walking them through how they doomed several civilisations to destruction.

ASIDES AND ADVENTURES

The Referee should keep in mind that the Mission Division of their crew will want to study almost everything they find in this region and elsewhere. Any planetary survey could trigger a request to send down a landing team and take samples or spend a week or two in orbit whilst scientists check out an unusual ecosystem. Likewise, space scientists will want to visit potentially interesting systems or make detours to get a closer look at something that has attracted their attention. The social scientists are likely to be desperate to have an alien culture to learn about, and this region offers a wealth of opportunities.

The upshot of this is that the command crew will be constantly bombarded with requests to go here, make a stopover there and will need to accommodate their crew at least some of the time. Of course, any side trip – no matter how apparently simple – can expand into an adventure if something goes wrong or an interesting find is made. The Referee should take care to ensure the Travellers are not too distracted from their main mission but at the same time the exploration along the way is a critical part of the overall storyline.

The situation in the Near Side of Yonder is complex and initially the Travellers will have little to go on. Once they find a source of information they cannot be sure it will be unbiased. The local polities will be quite happy to vilify their enemies if it gains them the assistance of a powerful ship like *Deepnight Revelation*. Eventually a clearer picture will emerge but the Referee should bear in mind that just because the Travellers – who are unbiased since they have no history in the region – know the real story the local powers may be unwilling to accept it. After years of presenting another power as the bad guys, it will be difficult to reappraise them as fellow victims. Trust will be built slowly, if at all, and the general populace may not be receptive to the idea that 'the old enemy' is in fact a potential friend.

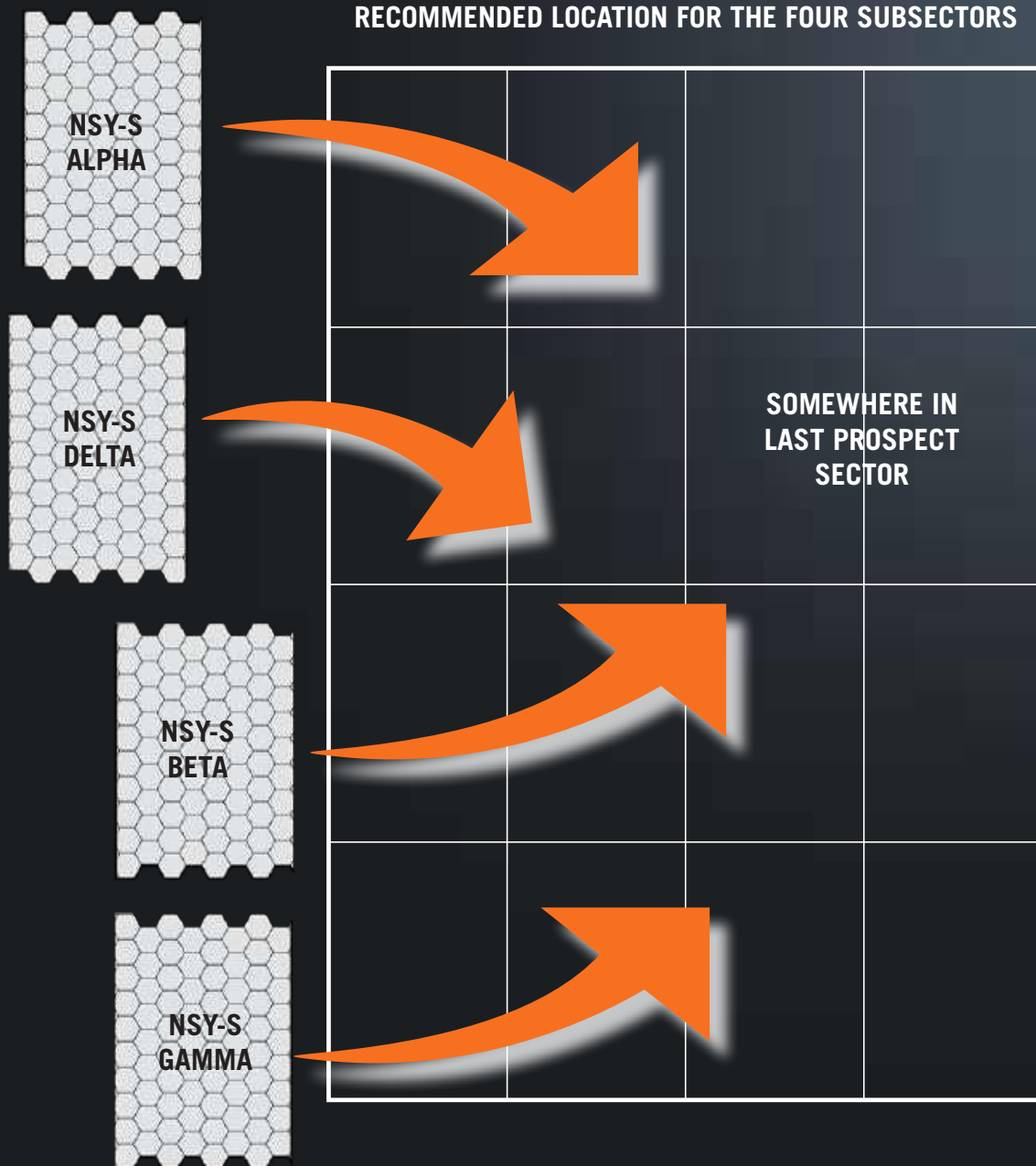
THE NSY-S REGION

This part of the *Deepnight Revelation* campaign takes place in a region about the size of four subsectors, which can be placed on the map wherever the Referee desires. Four subsector-sized areas are presented but it is not necessary to align them perfectly with existing subsectors. That might be convenient but if the NSY-S region needs to be aligned across a subsector boundary in order to make it fit where the Referee wants it, this should not be much of a problem. After all, the Travellers are likely to have made multiple abstracted Reaches to get into the region. It will thus be largely surrounded by unexplored space and can be placed as necessary.

This book presents partial data on these four subsector-sized areas, which are arranged as follows:

Important systems, and those the Travellers are likely to pass through, are presented in some detail. Most other systems are denoted only by what the Travellers would be able to detect from afar; their star type and arrangement of stars. If the Travellers choose to visit these systems the Referee can fully generate them as necessary using either the standard system creation rules found in the *Traveller Core Rulebook* or another method such as the quick system generation method presented in *The Great Rift* box set.

RECOMMENDED LOCATION FOR THE FOUR SUBSECTORS



The Referee is advised to follow a principle put forward by *Traveller's* original creator, Marc Miller. This is summarised as MOARN – Map Only As Really Necessary. If the Travellers do not go to a star system it does not really matter how many planets it has; if all they want is fuel then it will be necessary only to determine if gas giants are present.

The Referee can keep track of how much the Travellers know about a given system using the Survey Index detailed on page 71 of the *Referee's Handbook*. It can be assumed that a routine sweep of the region will provide a Survey Index of 3–4 for all systems on the maps of this book. This means that the Travellers' general map of the region will show the presence and type of stars or other stellar phenomena in the region, and may or may not show brown dwarf sub-stellar objects. As a rule, if the primary of a system is a brown dwarf it will be detected but a brown dwarf within a star system may not.

LOCATING THE ADVENTURE

The precise location of the four subsectors presented in this book is left up to the Referee. This allows the adventure to be placed in the path of a crew who take an unexpected route. However, there is a default and recommended location. Ideally, the four subsector-sized areas collectively referred to as NSY-S should be located in the Last Prospect sector, close to the edge of the Great Rift. This creates an incentive for the Travellers to get involved in local affairs, since there is a potential crossing point available in this region and they will need help if they want to use it.

If the NSY-S region is located elsewhere, the Referee may choose to allow the crossing to be possible without assistance. Perhaps an icy comet is discovered, allowing the gap to be bridged. There are still reasons to get involved in the local political situation and defeat the Citadels, however ideally the payoff should be assistance in getting across the Great Rift. This is a major incentive, since it will shave years off the projected voyage time.



ALIEN RACES

Two starfaring alien races are present in the Near Side of Yonder; three if the Citadels are considered a race in their own right. The Tenipal are humanoid, the Erline are most certainly not. Neither species is particularly advanced, nor is either 'good' or 'bad' in any meaningful sense. The Erline have diverged into two different cultures whilst the Tenipal could be argued to have one or many distinct societies. The Travellers will need to learn about and interact with all of these groups if they are to understand what is happening in the region.

THE TENIPAL

The Tenipal are upright bipeds with two genders, resembling humans in many ways. They stand roughly as tall as a human but are, in general, more powerfully built. Tenipal are also covered in fine fur, usually a sandy brown or tawny colour. Fur is generally more or less uniform in shade, matching head hair and also facial hair in males. They are mammalian, giving birth to live young and caring for them in an extended family group.

Physically, Tenipal are constructed much like humans. There are some differences although, they have four fingers on each hand and two thumbs, the top-thumb is similar to that of a human but there is also a bottom-thumb extending from the wrist bones on the outer side of the hand. This is as long as the shortest finger but not very dextrous. It can be used to anchor the hand whilst leaving fingers and top-thumb free and probably evolved for free-climbing. The bottom-thumb has a sharp claw that serves as a natural tool and weapon, whilst other digits lack the claw. A curious half-glove, covering the bottom-thumb and lower two fingers, is often worn by those working in fields where a sharp claw might be a liability.

The bottom-thumb has a parallel on the foot. Tenipal feet are more dextrous than those of humans, with longer toes and the ability to partially oppose the foot-thumb for grip. Opposite the foot-thumb, on the outer side of the foot, is a foot-claw that can be very handy when climbing barefoot and something of a nuisance the rest of the time. Tenipal shoes are designed to keep the foot-claw out of the way but some individuals prefer sandal-like footwear that allows the claw to be popped out. Mostly this is used for grip in rough terrain but it is not entirely unknown for office workers and the like to use the claw for all manner of slightly ridiculous purposes.

Being more physically powerful and equipped with better natural weapons than most other intelligent species, the Tenipal were slow to evolve tool use and retain a rather head-on approach to problems other species would tackle with tools, planning and teamwork. They are an extremely pragmatic species, attracted to the simple, the functional and the elegant, rather than to beauty for its own sake, although this varies between their cultures.

Evolution and History

The Tenipal had a slow evolution into a technological civilisation. Most species develop abstract thought and the ability to communicate complex concepts as a result of changing conditions and a need to overcome difficult situations but, where the majority continue to develop, the Tenipal seem to have obtained what they needed and then ceased progress. For hundreds of thousands of years, perhaps more, they roamed the temperate plains and forests of their homeworld as highly advanced animals on the verge of sentience and once they became fully self-aware this lifestyle seemed entirely adequate.

The Tenipal have been physically modern, in the sense that they have changed little in terms of physicality or brain structure, for half a million years. It was only in the last 70,000 years that they began a slow progress towards their modern state, probably a result of their rise to dominance on their homeworld. Simple weapons and time-honoured teamwork practices were sufficient to obtain food and protect the family group, whilst social structures larger than a collection of family groups were unnecessary.

Around 70,000 years ago the Tenipal finally began cultivating crops and moving towards a city-based culture. Over the next 30,000 years or so they unified their homeworld and developed a mature mid-tech civilisation. This was destroyed by an ice age that saw the Tenipal driven into a narrow equatorial strip. After thousands of years, the glaciers began to retreat and the Tenipal expanded back into their former homelands. Little remained of their previous civilisation but progress towards technology began once more. This time, the Tenipal advanced more quickly and a mere 15,000 years saw them launch their first spacegoing craft.

The Tenipal in Space

It was during the early exploration of their solar system that the Tenipal made contact – of a sort – with an alien culture. This took place when the wreck of a starship was found in orbit around their homeworld. The ship was obviously centuries, or perhaps millennia, old and its internal layout caused the Tenipal great confusion for many years. It was partially set out for an entirely different species but there were areas of the ship that were almost perfect for Tenipal.

Various theories were propounded, including the idea that pre-ice age Tenipal had advanced much further than had previously been thought. A combination of reverse engineering and curiosity as to whether there might be lost colonies to be discovered, spurred a rare surge of development, leading eventually to the first Tenipal starships. These conducted a predictably methodical exploration of local space, which in turn led to colonies being set up on various worlds and finally made contact with the Erline.

Contact with the Erline was confusing rather than informative. They were a clear physical fit for the wreck but claimed no knowledge of the Tenipal or their homeworld. This claim was true but all the same confusion and mutual mistrust led to a war of sorts. Neither culture was prepared in the slightest and the result was an amateurish but costly series of encounters between improvised warships or armed exploration vessels. Both sides groped for one another in the dark, with little idea what to do if an enemy was encountered.

The situation was further complicated when ships from the Sovereigns were encountered. These were mistaken for Erline designs – which was partially true – by the Tenipal and fired upon. Another round of conflict ensued until a crippled Sovereign warship was boarded and the bodies of the crew examined. Finding both Tenipal and Erline aboard, and an entirely different language in use to that of the Erline, the Tenipal realised there was a third faction active in their region; one apparently composed of both species. This is seen by the Tenipal as the beginning of the modern era.

Social Organisation

The Tenipal have retained many elements of their long existence as hunter-gatherers. They value practical knowledge and wisdom – the traits of a hunter-gatherer band leader – and have created a pseudo-meritocracy as the underlying concept of their civilisation. This was once a true meritocracy, in which individuals who displayed leadership skills rose freely to the top of society and those who had useful skills and knowledge

formed a second echelon beneath them. Those lacking talent, ambition or the good fortune to display either formed the base level of this three-tier system.

The system worked well enough as hunter-gatherer bands coalesced into villages and towns, and survived the early city-building stage. Inevitably, however, the system began to stagnate into formalised demonstrations of leadership and wisdom, to the point where conformity to established norms was far more important than the ability to adapt to unusual circumstances. Over time, Tenipal society has become highly bureaucratic and ritualised. The result is an efficient economy and a stable society but one that is unimaginative and discouraging towards innovation.

Modern Tenipal society is based on the same three social echelons, which might be broadly defined as workforce, specialists and leaders. Social mobility is quite common but is more about box-ticking than actual ability. An earnest young leader candidate who has given hours of thought to a concept and gives a heartfelt, insightful response to an interview question might, if lucky, be asked again until they give the approved standard answer. More commonly, they will be passed over in favour of someone who fits the existing mould more fully.

Society is governed by senior officials appointed by committees of their peers. City governors appoint regional governors and regional governors convene to appoint or remove planetary governors. Governmental services, scientific research and the military are directly controlled at the planetary, regional and city level. As might be expected, procedures are formal and rather inflexible, although society as a whole has sufficient experience to have formulated effective responses to most situations.

Society in general is also rather formalised, with rituals surrounding most interactions and many common activities. Travellers are likely to find interacting with the Tenipal frustrating as they insist on observing all these little social rituals. A Tenipal will offer the coffee pot to everyone in the room, individually, before refilling his own cup and will greet every single new arrival with the same slight hunch-bow and furred-bottom-thumb gesture of peace, even if they just popped out of the room for a minute.

The upshot of this stagnation – some would go so far as to call it fossilisation – is that the Tenipal are extremely polite and considerate of those around them but take far too long to get simple things done. It may be that this is a result of the rapid change in circumstances

that took place when evidence of aliens was discovered. In an uncertain universe the Tenipal take great comfort in knowing their place among their own kind and are both reassured and made happy by what most other cultures would consider endless repetition of pointless social ritual.

Technology

The Tenipal have achieved a mid-TL9 society, with a few irregularities. Technologies necessary to space exploration have been pushed to the point where workable equipment has been developed but theoretical science lags behind what might be expected from a race with these capabilities. As a result, the Tenipal lack the knowledge to advance further. They are not unduly concerned about this; they have what they need to do what they want and, to their mindset, this is enough.

Other technologies range from TL9 down to TL7, depending on how much theoretical science is required. Medicine, for example, uses the best equipment TL9 can produce but is driven by a lower level of scientific understanding. Highly theoretical areas like mathematics or cosmology are neglected in favour of traditional concepts. This is one factor in the general technological stagnation experienced by the Tenipal and their forays into a number of dead end applications.

Notably, the Tenipal jump drive is a dead end. It works well enough and actually requires a little less fuel than the standard one-parsec jump drive of Charted Space. However, it is derived from the Erline drive, which was itself a technological mis-step. Whilst the Erline have realised their errors in developing the drive, to the Tenipal it is entirely sufficient. They can get from one star system to the next with it and that is enough for now, so the Tenipal are unlikely to develop a jump-2 drive. To do so they would have to go back to underlying scientific principles and research a new jump-1 drive, then extrapolate to reach higher capabilities. They are highly unlikely to do so.

Military

The Tenipal have always had a need for scout/protectors within their tribal and family groups, and this developed naturally into a military class. Unlike many societies, warriors did not emerge as a ruling elite but remained subservient to the leadership. Today, the military is considered part of the 'specialist' echelon of society, with higher status than most ordinary citizens but no social leadership role.

The scout/hunter/warrior concept has survived to the present day, with an emphasis on individual marksmanship and long-range, precise weapon systems.

Small unit operations are the norm, since the Tenipal lacked a planetary enemy to fight large-scale wars against during their expansion into local star systems. Constraints of space aboard starships reinforced the concept that a small force was likely to be all there was available, so it should be as capable as possible.

Tenipal commanders are not imaginative, tending to run tried and tested set-piece solutions to whatever problems they encounter, but are effective at small force coordination. Troops, likewise, tend to be skilled and courageous. Oddly perhaps, the emphasis on tried and tested solutions leads to a high level of initiative among ground forces. Units are familiar with the standard evolutions and at the small unit scale, simple generally works. More complex situations are not as well dealt with but the unimaginative, yet robustly executed, manoeuvres of a small force are generally highly effective.

Vehicles and aircraft are typically multirole platforms with standard variants tailored to different situations. This is not the most efficient approach for any theatre of war but a vehicle might be deployed to a distant world where obtaining a specialist unit would require waiting several weeks. Thus vehicle crews work with what they have and few attempts have been made to create high end vehicles for very specific roles. Aerospace defences are considered important, with a relatively high proportion of the military budget spent on ground-based missile launchers and interceptor craft capable of engaging a target in orbit.

Starships and Spacecraft

Tenipal space vessels are workmanlike in construction, with a clear divide between those intended for commercial or civilian use and military craft. The latter are of low capability for their tonnage, favouring long-range weapons such as missile batteries. The low priority placed on theoretical research has resulted in a reliance on tried and tested concepts such as physical projectiles; for short-range combat Tenipal ships rely on torpedoes and rail guns.

The standard Tenipal battle tactic goes all the way back to their hunter/gatherer origins. Ideally, the target will be ambushed and eliminated at long range with missiles. If a formal engagement is necessary, part of the force will draw the attention of the enemy, either with missile attack or by appearing to close for a torpedo assault. This is usually a feint, intended to make the enemy shift defensive fire, but a foe who does not react may find the 'feint' pressed home after all.

TENIPAL TRAVELLERS

Tenipal are suitable for play as Travellers. They can enter any career, although their SOC will determine which are most suitable. SOC 1–6 indicates a member of the general workforce, who will tend to be Citizens or low-ranking members of the Entertainer or Merchant careers. SOC 7–10 indicates a member of specialist careers such as the Army, Navy, Merchants and Scholars. SOC 11+ indicates a member of the leadership class, although these individuals might be of low personal rank, such as a clerk on the staff of the city governor. Any Tenipal holding commissioned rank 4 or above (such as a naval Commander) automatically increases SOC to 10 if it is lower. There is no direct parallel for the Noble career; most leaders will be high-ranking members of the Citizen career or one of the specialist services.

Characteristics

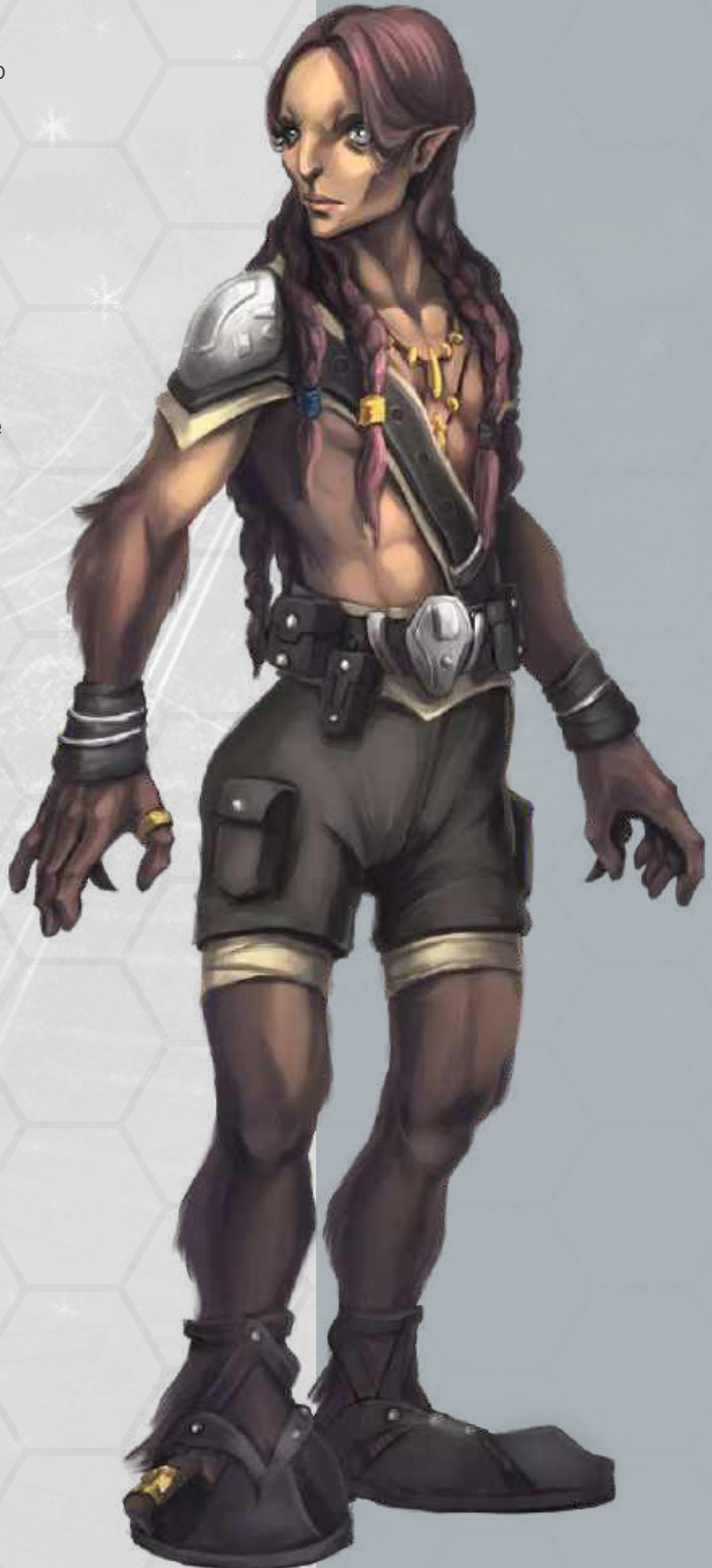
Tenipal Travellers have the following modifiers applied to their characteristics: STR +2, END +2, INT –2, EDU –3

Traits

All Tenipal have the following Traits.

Claws: The claws of the Tenipal, if uncovered, grant +2 to damage in unarmed combat and DM+2 on checks to grip or climb suitable surfaces such as wood or earth.

Unimaginative: All Tenipal suffer DM-2 to grasp an entirely new concept or make a leap of imagination. For example, a Tenipal scientist trying to figure out a device of unknown function will struggle more than a human might, because they fail to see possibilities that might be obvious to someone else.



THE ERLINE

The Erline are egg-laying crustaceans, vaguely resembling a crab with four manipulator arms instead of two claws. They stand about half a metre from the ground, with three legs on each side. Their bodies are typically 120 centimetres long by 75 centimetres at the widest point, covered with segmented scales rather than the single large shell of a crab.

Erline have six eyes, all located on the front of the head. This has limited side-to-side and up-down movement, compensated for by the arrangement of the eyes. The innermost pair are for close focus and can see very small objects and make possible fine work at the cost of a headache, which makes Erline craftsmen rather irritable. The next pair face forward and slightly up, giving a binocular view of the area ahead of the Erline. On each side of the head is a larger eye, which bulges out slightly on an internal stalk.

An Erline thus has a roughly 270-degree field of vision, although most of this is covered by the outer eyes which are optimised for noticing movement and creating a general impression of the surroundings without providing much detail. The outer eyes are relatively easy to fool with camouflage but very sensitive to movement. They are sometimes known as the 'eyes of defence', whereas the forward-facing pairs are the 'eyes of predation' and the 'eyes of detail'.

The four manipulator limbs of the Erline have three fingers, all mutually opposable at 60 degrees from one another. The fingers of the lower limbs end in claws and can be used for digging in loose soil, one of the ways primitive Erline used to hunt. The upper limbs are more delicate and best suited to fine work in conjunction with the eyes of detail.

Evolution and History

The Erline evolved as shoreline predators, although they are omnivorous and capable of subsisting on an almost entirely vegetarian diet. In addition to ambushing other shore dwellers from a hide dug under sand, Erline would gather seaweed and shallow-water plants. Their first tools were probably fishing nets or the implements needed to make them out of twisted seaweed and, having grasped the idea of producing useful devices, the species advanced quickly.

The Erline are not ideally shaped to be either technological city-builders or spacefarers but overcame difficulties with innovation and the development of complex tools. These included mechanically operated reaching and manipulating devices, which eventually developed into waldos and remotely controlled tools.

This attitude of approaching almost any task by building a device allowed rapid development into a technological society but also proved to be the downfall of the first Erline civilisation.

Around 12,000 years ago the Erline launched their first spacecraft. True to form, this was a remotely-controlled probe and was followed by many more. Within a few years their robots had explored the nearby planets and follow-up missions were launched to land construction equipment. The first Erline to set foot on another world did not arrive in an exploration ship so much as a removal van; they moved into a ready-built settlement and began a new life in comfort rather than scratching out an existence whilst learning about their new environment.

The Erline expanded throughout their star system and eventually developed a basic jump drive. As noted elsewhere, this was a dead end technology that could not lead to higher jump capability, however it was sufficient for the first wave of expansion. This was conducted in no great hurry, with extensive use made of robotic craft for dangerous or complex work. The expansion ended abruptly when the Erline found... something. There are no records of what it might have been but there are indications they encountered a manifestation of the Deepnight Entity. Modern Erline historians are aware that expansion stopped and measures were taken to counter some unknown threat. They have not yet discovered the details, however.

The Erline and the Citadels

Whatever threat the Erline encountered, it was sufficient to make them stop in their tracks. All exploration and development of colonies was curtailed, with available resources focussed on the creation of a counter. This was the first Citadel, although the Erline would not know it by that name. The Citadel was a gigantic robotic installation cut into an asteroid in a remote part of their star system. It was provided with craft optimised for prospecting, mining and the gathering of resources, and programmed to protect the Erline species against the threat. Once the project was complete, the Erline apparently went back to exploration and colonisation efforts.

The Citadel was not self-aware, and could not be considered an artificial intelligence, but it was a smart expert system tasked with protecting the Erline species as a whole. It had no jump-capable vessels, as there were no organic astrogators to operate them, but it gradually built more craft to defend its people. These monitored the comings and goings of the Erline and when the Erline homeworld became infected it acted to save the rest of the race.



The infection was probably introduced to the Erline homeworld by a vessel carrying infected crewmembers, although it is possible that no more than a few spores reached the planetary surface. This would have been enough if the Erline were unprepared and, given their propensity for building tools rather than taking decisive action, it is quite possible their homeworld was largely overrun. The best narrative that can be put together from available evidence is that the Citadel became aware that the homeworld was lost even whilst its inhabitants clung to the belief it could be saved. The Citadel's programming was absolute – save the species. And so it did.

The Citadel imposed a blockade around the homeworld, destroying any ship that tried to leave. Its mining ships selected a group of suitable asteroids and launched them on a collision course that would take years to reach the homeworld. In the meantime the Citadel prevented any ships from leaving, although it was willing to allow vessels to land if they did not heed its warnings. Eventually the asteroids impacted the homeworld in a sustained bombardment that lasted over a decade. What little survived the fireballs and shockwaves died out in the nuclear winter that followed, until the Erline homeworld was barren of life.

This was not enough for the Citadel. Its programming allowed it to predict which of the Erline colonies might have been infected and each of these was a potentially lethal threat to the entire species. There was only one answer; complete eradication of every possible infection point. So the Citadel embarked upon its own great mission; the preservation of the Erline species by any means necessary.

The Erline lost their homeworld and with it their main centre of industry and technology. The next decades were characterised by confusion and dismay, since no colony was quite sure what had happened or why. Expeditions to the homeworld did not return and smaller surviving colonies began to collapse for lack of support. Some had a sufficient industrial base to stand a chance of survival, although only two would weather these difficult times.

These two took very different approaches to ensuring survival. One hunkered down, drawing in all resources its people could gather and embarking upon a programme of industrial and economic growth. The other, aware there was a sentient species on a nearby world, began launching missions to capture a breeding population for use as servitors. Both eventually lost the technology to build starships and became confined to a single system once existing ships wore out. Both eventually re-emerged but by then they were quite different societies.

ERLINE TRAVELLERS

Erlines are suitable for play as Travellers, although they are rather alien and have some peculiarities that may be a challenge to roleplay. Erlines may come from the Erline Worlds or the Sovereigndoms or perhaps a lost enclave that has managed to survive without being detected.

Characteristics

Erline Travellers have the following modifiers applied to their characteristics: END +4, INT +1

Traits

All Erlines have the following Traits:

Tough Crustacean: An Erline gains +4 Protection from its external plates and tough skin. Conventional armour cannot be worn over this, although some specialist coverings do exist. In addition, an Erline can operate for 2D minutes in hard vacuum or 6D minutes in partial vacuum before beginning to suffer ill effects.

Tool-User Extreme: All Erlines suffer DM-1 on any task they have to complete with their own physical resources but gain DM+2 on anything done remotely. This includes Electronics (remote ops) operations but also tasks requiring waldos or standoff systems such as drones or missiles.



THE CITADELS

The Citadels are not a political entity in the common sense, in that they are not self-aware and have only the agenda they were programmed with. They are, however, very much a political force as they exert influence over the whole region. The first Citadel was built in the Erline home system, in an extreme example of their 'build a tool to solve the problem' approach. This Citadel dealt with the infection of the homeworld by the Deepnight Entity in a manner that ensured the infestation was eradicated, although at the cost of destroying the heart of the Erline civilisation.

Once this was done, the Citadel set about eradicating possible infestations on other colonies. The limited information available suggested the initial infection had to come from somewhere and that at least some of the Erline colonies were likely to have been affected. Selecting those most likely to have been overwhelmed the Citadel began engineering their destruction. This was an extremely long term plan but with no other options it accepted the time frame and got to work.

The first phase was to increase its fleet of resource gathering vessels even further and ensure its own circuits and machinery could be replaced when necessary. Once enough spares were available to ensure its survival, the Citadel began constructing others like it. These, too, had manufacturing facilities and a central processing core located deep in an asteroid but differed in that they were smaller and more mobile. Once the first was built, the new Citadel was programmed with its mission and its imperative to destroy the infestation, and began its long voyage.

Capable only of delivering a low level of thrust, the new Citadel's drives were used to break its orbit and send it on a precisely calculated slingshot trajectory around the system's sun. Once up to speed it would shut down all but the most essential systems and wait. The voyage to another star might take thousands of years but there was no alternative if the Erline species was to be protected. The Citadel would have to make the journey and hope its systems survived the long transit in a condition that allowed it to destroy the infestation at the far end.

Several Citadels were produced and launched in this manner, along with less capable versions intended for a different role. Where full Citadels were intended to launch probes at the end of their journey and attempt to determine whether an infestation had occurred, these simpler versions were aimed at systems thought likely to be infected. Their mission was to launch weapons as soon as they were in range then crash into the planet, a brute force approach but one that might succeed.

The Citadels are not intrinsically good or bad. They follow rather literal programming and are likely to interpret any interference with their mission as hostile. Their aim is to ensure the survival of the Erline species by eliminating any possible source of infection, even at the cost of exterminating whole planetary populations. All they know is the numbers game, balancing probability of infection for a given colony against the near-certainty that other worlds will fall if the infestation is not eradicated. All their major decisions were made long ago and today they slavishly carry out a flawed plan implemented in a rush by people who did not consider the consequences of their actions.

Each Citadel is an asteroid, with tunnels and artificial caverns housing automated workshops and launch bays. They have a drive system and defences, in the form of beam weapons and mass driver guns. Internal defence is provided by robotic platforms originally intended for maintenance and resource gathering. The Citadels, as the name suggests, are equipped for self-preservation and programmed to use lethal force without warning against any intruder.

THE CITADELS AND THE DEEPNIGHT ENTITY

The original Citadel knows only what its creators taught it about the Deepnight Entity and they knew little. Its own observations during the infestation of the Erline homeworld are of little value to it, as it was never programmed for scientific analysis. It only knows the entity is a major threat to the survival of the Erline and sufficiently insidious that it must be completely eradicated wherever it appears. The Citadel was programmed to look for the signs of infestation but its information was patchy and incomplete. This was passed on to subordinate Citadels, with the result that they are likely to misinterpret data and err on the side of complete annihilation.

The greatest irony of the situation is that the Erline of old engineered their own destruction in response to a threat less severe than they believed. Only the homeworld was infected and quarantine measures were effective in containing the infestation. It is not clear where the initial contact occurred but none of the colonies were affected. This did not prevent the Citadels from launching missions to eradicate a suspected infestation and wiping out colonies that had struggled for millennia after the collapse of Erline interstellar society.

C H A P T E R T H R E E

POLITIES OF THE REGION

There are three major polities in the region, not counting the Citadels. Two represent the mainstream cultures of the Erline and Tenipal whilst the third, the Sovereigndoms, is dominated by an offshoot of the Erline culture.

THE TENIPAL ALLIANCE

The term 'alliance' is a transliteration into Anglic of the Tenipal name for their society. This word has complex connotations of mutual dependence and duties toward one another and also of distant family and common culture. However the political arrangement is not, strictly speaking, an alliance in the usual sense. Tenipal worlds are not independent states but autonomous parts of a greater whole. It is difficult to convey the subtleties of the situation in a single title, so the Mission staff aboard *Deepnight Revelation* will settle on 'Alliance' as good enough for most purposes.

The Tenipal Alliance consists of the homeworld and a handful of major colonies, with a scattering of outposts generally falling under the auspices of one of the major members. Each world is self-governing, with an overall leader appointed by representatives from the member worlds. These representatives form a council that appears to be a central government for the whole alliance. In practice, it is not. Councillors are still subordinate to their parent world's leader and have no authority over other member worlds. However, these individuals advise the appointed leader, who does have authority if they choose to exercise it. Commonly, the council produces guidelines that are approved by the leader and implemented voluntarily by member states, with orders very rarely given.

The governmental structure of the Tenipal Alliance is not all that different to that used by a band of hunter-gatherers in the distant past. The overall leader does not micromanage the actions of a family group detached to set up a camp and does not second-guess the experienced leader of a team of hunters. Instead, they offer wisdom and advice when needed, and if they do take direct control their words have added weight because this is such a rare occurrence.

Military and Naval Power

The Tenipal Alliance has a modest fleet that serves the Alliance as a whole rather than individual member states. Member worlds may be assigned vessels for local

defence, placed under the command of the world's military leaders for the duration of the deployment but all military starships are centrally controlled. Smaller craft such as fighters and patrol boats may be part of the planetary armed forces or the Alliance fleet.

Most vessels favour missile armament, sometimes complemented with torpedo launchers or rail guns for close combat. Beam weapons are rarely used, although the technology is understood and used in communication and targeting systems. Vessels tend to be oversized for their capabilities; this is inefficient but makes warships more habitable in the long term. This is important to the Tenipal Alliance, as transits from one deployment area to another can take a several weeks and missions beyond the inner colonies are usually very lengthy.

Planetary armed forces are lightly equipped, with few heavy vehicles. Those that do exist tend to be weapons carriers rather than armoured fighting vehicles; lightly protected artillery and fire support platforms are the norm, along with transport vehicles. Tenipal ground forces typically fight as light infantry with support and mobility provided by formations that do not engage the enemy – at least not directly. The Alliance has had a few internal disputes but its groundside military experience is almost exclusively of skirmishes in cities and capture of installations, or else security operations against ill-armed rebels and hostile wildlife.

Political Agenda

The Alliance is not expansionistic in the sense of a manifest destiny to conquer and control the stars, however its members tend to look outwards and will begin planning to colonise any suitable world they become aware of. This is not, for the most part, done with any great urgency but the Tenipal consider nearby space to be 'theirs but for the annexation' and would be willing to fight over territorial claims they have never made public but which they feel should be obvious to everyone.

The Alliance has a history of conflict with the Erline Worlds, although this is intermittent and fighting has not been particularly savage. The Alliance would be amenable to changing relations with the Erline Worlds in a more positive direction if they can be convinced that the Erline of the Erline Worlds are different to those of the Sovereigndoms.

The Tenipal are aware that members of their species were taken from their homes to serve the lords of the Sovereigndoms. There are suspicions that abductions are continuing and that Tenipal in the Sovereigndoms live in conditions not far short of slavery. Resentment within the Alliance is deep-rooted and not entirely without cause, so convincing the Alliance to open talks with their enemies will be difficult.

THE SOVREIGNDOMS

The Sovereigndoms are theoretically independent world-states answering to an Erline 'Absolute Overlord'. The actual term does not translate well, as it has connotations of membership of an association of peers and respect for their position but also complete and total dominance. The simplest translation is 'sovereign', so this will be applied by the Mission Division staff when they present their first analysis of the Sovereigndoms. The Travellers may come up with their own name, of course.

Each planetary overlord is autonomous and has complete jurisdiction over people and territory. Subjects in another sovereign's territory are subject to local laws and it is rare for an overlord to take an interest in the fate of their people unless there is an interest in a mission or them personally. Thus ambassadors and officials, along with powerful or influential individuals, can rely on some protection from the whims of a foreign overlord but common citizens are on their own.

The system progresses downward from the planetary sovereign, with an echelon of what might be considered noble houses each responsible for a geographical or technological area. A citizen's status is partially determined by the power of the lord they serve and partly by position within the society their lord rules. Those outside noble houses for whatever reason are considered stateless and have no legal or social protections.

The overall effect is a feudal system by any other name, in which Tenipal form a servant and functionary class. This is not the same thing as slavery, although it is difficult to tell the difference in a society so totally dominated by its upper echelons. Tenipal have the same rights as any other non-noble citizen but this is not saying much. They can rise to positions of power and influence within a noble household but cannot be nobles themselves. This is enforced by a simple rule of bloodline; a noble must be able to prove lineage from one of the early noble houses and since there is no possible way a member of a different species could be related to the great founding houses, all aliens are forever excluded from the upper echelons of the Sovereigndoms.

Cooperation between noble houses serving a planetary overlord is generally good, as it is enforced from above, but sovereigns themselves are as prone to bicker and block one another's plans as to assist. The politics of the Sovereigndoms is confusing to outsiders and probably not all that clear to the participants but a major external threat will unite the overlords... however briefly.

The Sovereigndoms have a mature TL9 technological and industrial base that is more or less uniform across all their worlds. The characteristic Erline outlook of making a tool to deal with a situation has been modified to include subordinates, which in this case means soldiers or workers from the Tenipal segment of society. These people are valued as much as any other commoners, which may make outsiders think they are considered to be expendable slave-soldiers, whereas in truth the overlords are just as willing to sacrifice low-status Erline. People are considered low value assets by the overlords but lives are not thrown away needlessly. The balance point between necessity and preservation of life is set rather lower than in other societies however, which may colour interactions between the Sovereigndoms and crew of the *Deepnight Revelation*.

Military and Naval Power

There is no overall military or naval structure in place; each overlord has their own forces, which rarely operate together. When they do, the usual format is one of informal cooperation interspersed with bickering, although sometimes one overlord will command subordinates to follow orders of an agreed force leader. The negotiations leading up to such an agreement can be complex but once in place the subordinates will almost always obey unless it is clearly not in their lord's interests.

Naval and military operations tend to be on a small scale. Most overlords concentrate on developing their own home system, with minor territories elsewhere, so the majority of craft owned by a sovereign are non-jump-capable transports and defensive vessels. Those jump-capable ships that do exist fall into two general types; those intended to carry important people or the overlord are equipped with standoff weapons such as missiles or fighters, whilst 'lesser' vessels are designed to engage the enemy with beam weapons at close range.

Groundside military forces are similarly split into bombardment and assault units. Deployed forces are usually small and built around a support/command formation led by an important member of the noble house. This formation includes artillery and aerospace defence units plus fast vehicles that can be detached to give fire support or conduct reconnaissance. The bulk



of the force is made up of infantry, most of whom are Tenipal working under Erline officers. As with starships, the emphasis is on keeping important nobles safe whilst the common citizenry do most of the actual fighting.

Political Agenda

Any of the sovereigns would happily extend their influence or territory but practical considerations make it necessary to choose carefully where to target an expansion plan. A few suffer from rampant ambition and are likely to over-extend but most are wily enough to take the long view. Expansion tends to be careful and tailored to the personal interests of the overlord.

The sovereigns are inclined to consider Tenipal as inferiors, to be exploited where possible. They are not a slave race as such but within the Sovereigndoms they belong among the lower orders of society. This leads to a mindset that the leaders of the Tenipal Alliance are somehow not on the same level as an overlord of the Sovereigndoms. It is therefore not merely acceptable to manipulate, and at times cheat, the Alliance but necessary in order to demonstrate superiority. This attitude does nothing to improve already strained relations and has caused a number of promising attempts to create lasting peace treaties to collapse into continued skirmishing.

The Sovereigndoms feel a vague species-based kinship with the Erline Worlds but their cultural difference are a barrier. In particular, the way the Erline leadership has to pander to public opinion is distasteful to the absolute rulers of the Sovereigndoms. It is likely that citizens of the Erline Worlds do not realise the contempt they are held in by the Sovereigndoms, nor that many of the overlords see the Erline Worlds as a potential conquest. Direct military action is out of the question but political and economic manipulation could lead to opportunities. Typically this means engineering incidents to cause friction between the Tenipal Alliance and the Erline Worlds in the hope of discrediting the Erline leadership. The Sovereigndoms are cultivating various ambitious would-be leaders within the Erline Worlds, hoping to cause a shift in local politics that will realign some of the member worlds with the Sovereigndoms.

THE ERLINE WORLDS

The Erline Worlds centre upon those of the best established among the offworld colonies of the Erline at the time the first Citadel was built. The homeworld was destroyed not long after the first infection and most of the early colonies collapsed for lack of support. The Erline were able to survive on numerous worlds but technological regression was inevitable. Some worlds fell back to barbarism, others managed to stabilise at a low to mid Tech Level.

Over the course of the next few thousand years some of these colonies began to emerge as potential starfaring powers, only to be smashed by a Citadel arriving from sublight transit. Typically, the Citadels either entered orbit over the devastated world to watch for signs of infection and remained there, or moved to some other part of the system and deployed resource collection craft to obtain materials needed to maintain and repair their systems.

Those colonies with the right balance of population and low probability of infestation by the Deepnight Entity, as predicted by the original Citadel, had a chance to grow and re-establish a spacefaring civilisation. Early explorers were puzzled to find the remains of settlements on worlds they visited; settlements clearly created by their own people. This answered questions about the evolution of the Erline species – they were clearly not native to any of the worlds they discovered.

Exploration led to colonisation and gradually an enclave grew up around the distant colonies. The core worlds eventually progressed to an early TL10 industrial base and began to push out further, coming into contact with the Sovereigndoms and the Tenipal. Tensions with both were inevitable, not least since the Tenipal confused expeditions from the Erline Worlds with ships from the Sovereigndoms.

The Erline attitude to these expeditions was not so different to their other endeavours. As far as possible, tasks are undertaken remotely by robotic craft and vehicles. Where personal attention is needed, the Erline are not lacking in bravery but their instinct is to place tools and devices between them and any possible hazard. They tend to be reliant on remote sensors to create a warning zone around any ground exploration mission or settlement and this confidence can be misplaced when tools do not live up to expectations.

The Erline Worlds are governed according to a set of social duties, which creates a semi-democratic system with far more social mobility than among the Sovereigndoms. Leaders are selected by 'votes of approval' among those they represent, with each adult citizen having one vote in place at any given time. These can be rescinded at will and a leader whose approval falls too low will find themselves ousted by someone who has more followers.

Leadership of this sort is exercised at all levels from a few hundred citizens electing a representative to speak for them, up to governance of the whole interstellar state. Leaders at each level can appoint deputies to carry out tasks or oversee important functions, and their own vote of approval is used to select an individual to carry out the next highest leadership function. This is

a representative democracy in many ways but a rather odd one in which a sudden loss of approval at household level can cause a cascading change in leadership. The replacement of local leaders may result in their votes of approval being reassigned, replacing leaders at the next level up with possible repetition all the way to the top.

On a few rare occasions a wave of disaffection over purely local matters has caused the collapse of the entire governmental structure. Changes are usually much smaller in scale but can happen unexpectedly as votes are moved at the will of the citizen rather than at scheduled election times. One consequence of this system is that Erline senior leaders are constantly mindful of the need to maintain support, which means ensuring the contentment of the citizens at the lowest voting level. Interference in local affairs by higher leaders who should be looking to their own concerns is commonplace and occasionally policy decisions are made simply to please the citizens. As a result, external matters such as foreign policy and planned exploration are heavily influenced by internal factors. Projects may be extended or cancelled at short notice and leaders of such projects may find themselves under intense pressure to produce a spectacular result far beyond the remit they were initially given in order to stabilise the position of senior leaders.

Military and Naval Power

The Erline make greater use of vehicles and remotely controlled platforms than any other power in the region – other than the Citadels of course. Exploration and ground combat vehicles typically use a hybrid wheeled-walker design with large wheels on the end of long, multi-segmented legs. This results in large ground vehicles acting as platforms for reconnaissance drones, robotic instrument packages or smaller wheeled combat vehicles.

Combat units are usually made up of multiple primary vehicles and a collection of smaller ones. Where urban combat is necessary, it is usually carried out by combat robots directed from a mobile command centre and transported by specialist vehicles. Erline personnel are technicians and managers of their units rather than soldiers and only bear arms for self-defence.

Naval vessels are similarly reliant on remotely controlled subordinate craft. These are semi-autonomous and generally armed with close range weapons. Notably this tends to be a primitive plasma gun, necessitating a brute force approach to combat. An Erline vessel will typically try to swarm an enemy ship with high-firepower drone fighters, accepting heavy losses in return for the destruction of the target. Factories are constantly

churning out more fighters, so recovering from a battle is typically a matter of meeting a transport ship to receive more craft.

This reliance on standoff weaponry and drone systems leads to a very cautious and predictable style of warfare, in which the Erline will attack a target, inflict damage, then pull back to rearm before making another foray. Personnel casualties are acceptable up to a point but whilst the Erline are not dismayed by the destruction of countless combat robots they are not willing to undertake operations that will cost lives.

Political Agenda

The Erline Worlds have a generally expansionistic outlook, undertaking steady exploration and annexation of nearby worlds. This can vary, notably when the public mood is altered by some major setback or triumph, but for the most part the citizenry want a safe, steady expansion carried out behind a defensive wall of robots and automated systems. The whole of society is deeply risk-averse but also complacent; reports of heavy losses among robotic exploration craft are of no great importance and the public has been fed a steady diet of cheap success for many years.

The Erline Worlds' early contacts with the Tenipal Alliance resulted in intermittent conflict. The Erline did not initially understand why the Tenipal saw them as enemies and considered the attacks unprovoked. By the time they realised the Tenipal saw them as forces from the Sovereigndoms there had been several skirmishes and a couple of small battles, leaving a feeling of enmity in place.

The leadership of the Erline are neutral towards the Tenipal Alliance by preference but feel a need to side with the Sovereigndoms, which puts them at odds with the Tenipal. They do not really understand the antipathy the Tenipal have towards the Sovereigndoms and therefore all Erline by association, which inhibits attempts to improve relations. There is also public opinion to consider; improving relations with 'the old enemy' instead of supporting the Sovereigndoms – who were culturally different but still kin – does not sit well with the lower echelons of society and is thus a risky strategy.

The Erline Worlds therefore tend to take the path of least resistance, being passively hostile to the Tenipal Alliance but ignoring it wherever possible and urging the Sovereigndoms to find a way to co-exist. If that can be achieved, it should be possible to gradually normalise relations and agree areas of influence. It might even be possible to rein in the Sovereigndoms, whose intermittent bouts of over-ambitious grasping could destabilise the region once again.

LOCAL POLITICS AT A GLANCE

The local political situation is very complex but the key features are:

The Tenipal Alliance: Resents the taking of Tenipal to be 'slaves', as they see it, within the Sovereigndoms. History of conflict with the Erline Worlds as a result of assumptions about all Erline. Unlikely to improve relations with the Sovereigndoms, would consider closer relations with the Erline Worlds.

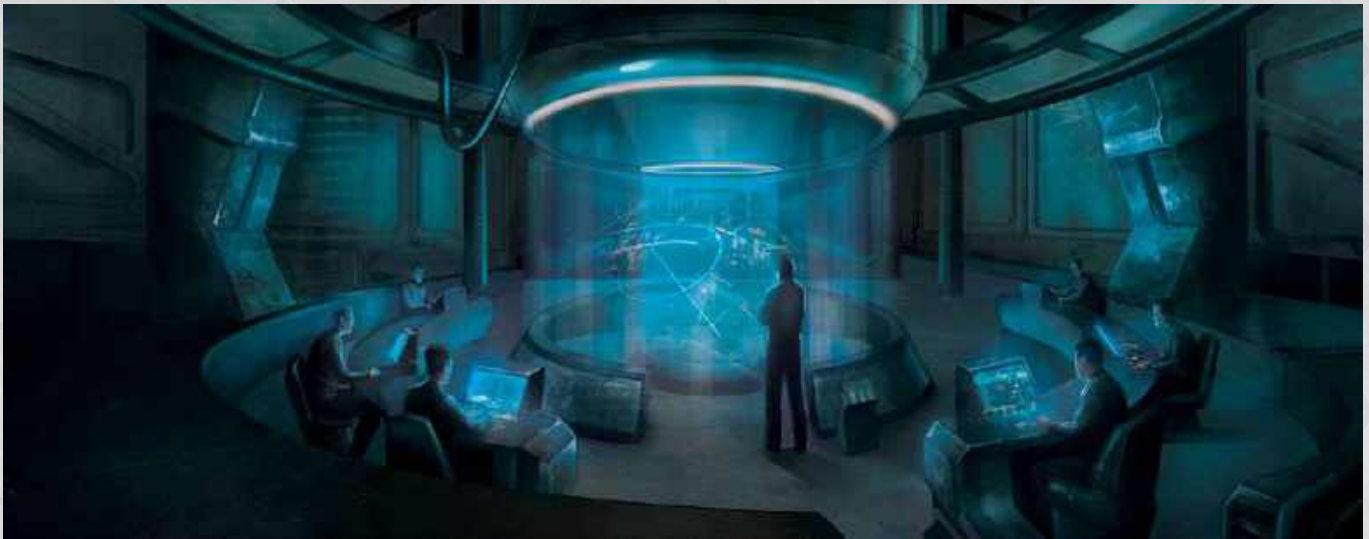
The Sovereigndoms: View themselves as superior to both other powers and particularly contemptuous of the Tenipal. Some overlords endeavour to manipulate the Erline Worlds and Tenipal Alliance into further conflict, in order to profit from the disruption. Internal politics is fragmented as sovereigns compete against one another, reducing the chance of unified action and possibly resulting in schemes interfering with others.

The Erline: Would prefer to establish a comfortable peace that kept problems at arm's length and expand in other directions. Generally well-disposed towards the Sovereigndoms due to a misplaced sense of kinship and unaware that this is not reciprocated. Hostility of conflict with the Tenipal, who are viewed as aggressive due to early unprovoked aggression, but willing to work towards a partnership so long as public opinion accepts it.

THE CITADELS

Each Citadel is entirely autonomous once out of communications range of the original. They are not governed by artificial intelligences; their central programming is sophisticated but ultimately limited and their remit has remained the same since their creation. The central directive is to ensure the survival of the Erline species regardless of other considerations. This caused the original Citadel to make the cold decision to wipe out several colonies thought likely to be infected by the Deepnight Entity, so continues to drive the Citadels' decision-making processes.

The Citadels will defend the Erline species from any threat they can recognise, including those they only suspect. Their decision-making process is complex but also flawed, potentially leading to a decision to attack based only on the possibility of threat. For example,



Deepnight Revelation is sufficiently powerful that if she turned against the Erline there would be little they could do about it. A Citadel might balance this remote possibility against the destruction she could cause and come to the conclusion the ship must be eliminated. A secondary layer of decision-making would determine whether the Citadel chose to act immediately or wait for an opportunity to strike by surprise.

CITADELS AND TARGETS

The Citadels have been en route for many centuries and may be spread over a wide area. They were initially aimed at systems expected to be infested by the Deepnight Entity but later launches were subject to wider targeting parameters. Any system that might be colonised by the time a Citadel arrived was a potential infestation site, so some Citadels were launched towards possible habitable worlds. If a Citadel found one and it was not infested, it would defend the world. If there were any signs of infestation, it would be obliterated.

With no reliable means to determine if a site is infested, these wandering Citadels are a potential threat to any inhabited world or starship they encounter. The Referee is free to place additional Citadels anywhere in the region, although it is unlikely any will have travelled further than 100 parsecs. It is, however, conceivable that one might someday reach Charted Space or the far side of the Great Rift.

When not actively eliminating threats, the Citadels gather resources and fabricate spares or additional utility craft. This is a slow process but time means nothing to these machines unless there is an imminent threat. Some Citadels will begin a transit to other systems, seeking potential threats or heading for expected colony locations. If they find an extant Erline colony they may take up a defensive position over it without explaining why – to their logic the Erline would know what the tools they made are doing – or might begin searching for signs of infestation. There are numerous ways this could lead to conflict.

The Citadels do not communicate in any meaningful manner. They transmit signals but these are electronic exchanges using a programming language and protocols dating back millennia. The signals may be recognised as an attempt to interface with other electronic equipment once the nature of the Citadels is determined but establishing any form of communication would require a lengthy examination of a Citadel's hardware and programming. This might be possible if sufficient subordinate craft and robots were captured, with the final result being a device capable of comprehending the signals sent by a Citadel.

These signals are mostly attempts to establish an interface and not followed up unless a suitable and intelligible response is detected. If it is, the Citadel will begin transmitting status updates on its many systems. Sifting through this will be time consuming but should give the Travellers an indication of the Citadel's condition and capabilities. Once interface protocols are understood it will become possible to download logs stored aboard the Citadel. Much of this data is corrupted, as it goes back centuries or more. However, with enough time and effort it will be possible to piece together the origins and history of the Citadels.

C H A P T E R F O U R

STARSHIPS & EQUIPMENT

The local powers make use of a variety of starships.
Those detailed here are a representative sample.



HIGHGUARD: TENIPAL

Most critical technologies used by the Tenipal are derived from equipment found aboard a disabled Sovereigndoms ship and share the limitations of those systems. Whereas the Erline and the Sovereigndoms have learned lessons and advanced since, the Tenipal are content with what they have.

Tenipal Jump Drive

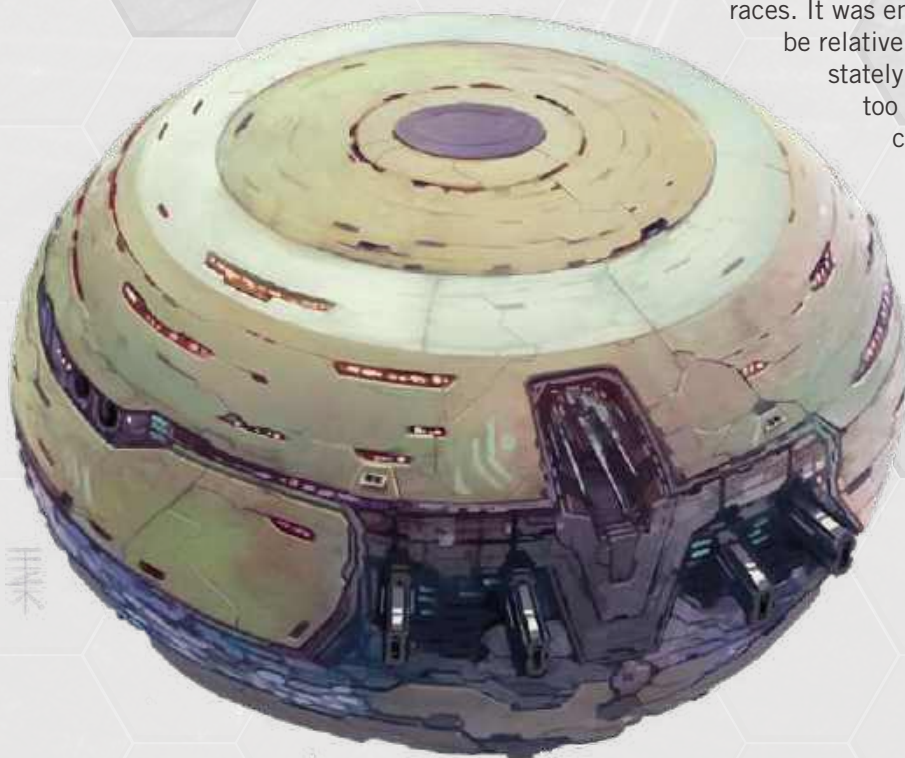
The jump drive used by the Tenipal is roughly the same size as the standard one found in Charted Space but is unreliable. All Engineer checks, including those to enter jump space, are made with DM-2 when using a Tenipal jump drive. However, fuel consumption is only 75% of standard (or 7.5% of the ship's tonnage per parsec) and some components are easier to fabricate. The Tenipal drive is a technological dead end; it cannot be improved to jump-2 or higher performance.

TENIPAL NAVAL VESSEL

Tenipal naval assets tend to be over-large and designed for long deployments or transits, with an emphasis on habitability rather than combat capability. The standard naval vessel is a 2,000-ton design shaped like an irregular flattened oblate spheroid. Internal layout is unusual, with all control spaces at the centre of the ship, surrounded by machinery. A toroidal power plant/drives chamber surrounds the combined engineering/gunnery/command bridge. This arrangement is efficient in some ways but can result in distractions as the bridge crew can see engineers rushing around the drive chamber or dashing through the command space to take a shortcut.

Hangars for four subordinate craft are located at the aft of the spheroid, in vertically arranged pairs with working space in between. The four rail gun bays occupy a similar position at the fore end of the spheroid, with missile bays on the flanks. Torpedo barbettes are scattered across the hull. This arrangement is intended for standoff combat, launching salvoes of missiles from a distance and reserving the rail guns for a pass to finish off crippled opponents. Torpedoes could also be fired during such a pass but are generally considered a deterrent to enemies that might otherwise want to close. Accommodation and generous living spaces are dispersed between the weapon bays and hangars.

The design of this vessel dates from a time before the Tenipal gained experience of combat against other races. It was envisaged that likely opponents would be relatively large, slow-moving craft and that a stately 1g acceleration would be sufficient to maintain standoff weapons range. A captain would be able to choose when to close range for a rail gun shot, and any opponent who got too close could be driven off with a barrage of torpedoes. Experience has shown that whilst these craft are tough, with an armoured hull and critical machinery inside a secondary citadel, an engagement rarely plays out on their own terms. Newer designs are beginning to incorporate lessons learned in skirmishes with the Sovereigndoms and Erline Worlds.



TENIPAL NAVAL VESSEL

TL9		TONS	COST (MCr)
Hull	2,000 tons, Sphere	—	80
Armour	Titanium Steel, Armour: 4	200	8
M-Drive	Thrust 1	20	40
J-Drive	Tenipal Jump Drive, Jump-1	55	82.5
Power Plant	Fusion (TL8), Power 800	80	40
Fuel Tanks	J-1 x2, 28 weeks of operation	356	—
Bridge		40	10
Computer	Computer/10	—	0.16
Sensors	Civilian Grade	1	3
Weapons	Medium Missile Bays x4	400	48
	Small Railgun Bays x4*	200	120
	Torpedo Barbettes x8	40	24
Ammunition	Missile Stowage (768 missiles)	64	—
Armoured Bulkheads	Bridge, Power Plant, J-Drive, M-Drive	19.5	3.9
Systems	Full Hangars (30-ton Boats x4)	240	48
	Fuel Processor (60 tons/day)	3	0.15
	Fuel Scoops	—	1
	Medical Bays x4	16	16
	Workshops x2	12	1.8
	Armoury	1	0.25
Staterooms	Standard x34	134	17
Software	Library	—	—
	Manoeuvre/O	—	—
	Jump Control/1	—	0.1
Common Areas		100	10
Cargo		15.5	—
TOTAL: MCr 553.86			



CREW

CAPTAIN, ASTROGATOR,
PILOTS X6, ENGINEERS X6,
MAINTENANCE X2, MEDIC
X4, GUNNERS X16, OFFICER

RUNNING COSTS

MAINTENANCE COST

Cr46155/month

PURCHASE COST

MCr553.86

POWER REQUIREMENTS

200

MANOEUVRE
DRIVE

400

BASIC SHIP
SYSTEMS

200

JUMP DRIVE

1

SENSORS

96

WEAPONS

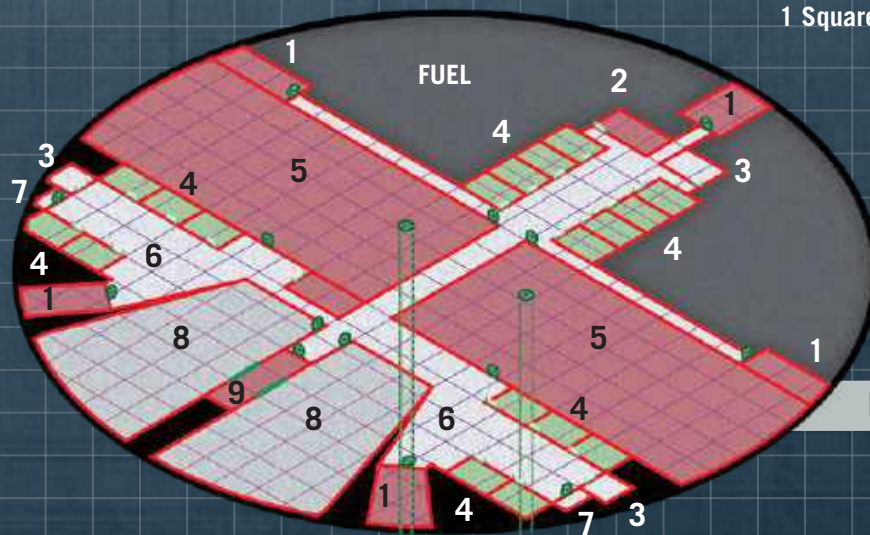
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HULL POINTS

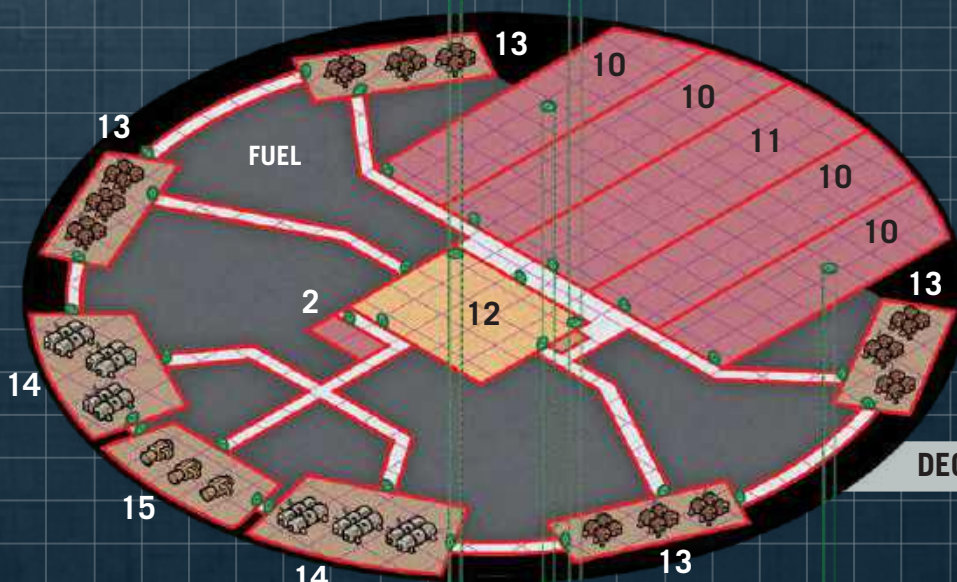
*The Tenipal railguns have a TL9

TENIPAL NAVAL VESSEL

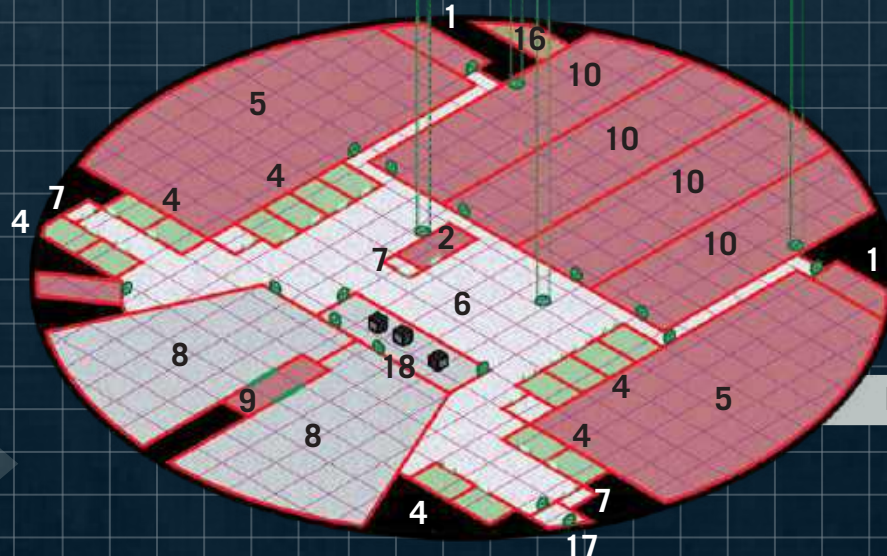
1 Square = 2 Tons



DECK 3



DECK 2



DECK 1

LEGEND

1. Torpedo bay
2. Medical bay
3. Fresher
4. Staterooms
5. Medium missile bay
6. Common area
7. Lockers
8. Hangar
9. Workshop
10. Small railgun bay
11. Missile stowage
12. Bridge
13. Power plant
14. Jump drive
15. Manoeuvre drive
16. Fuel processor
17. Airlock
18. Cargo hold

HIGHGUARD: ERLINE SOVREIGNDOMS

The Erline Sovereigns use more or less the same jump drive as the Tenipal, who derived theirs from a wrecked Sovereigns ship. The Erline Worlds are more advanced and use a standard jump-1 and jump-2 drive without the drawbacks of the earlier model but also lacking its advantage in fuel use.

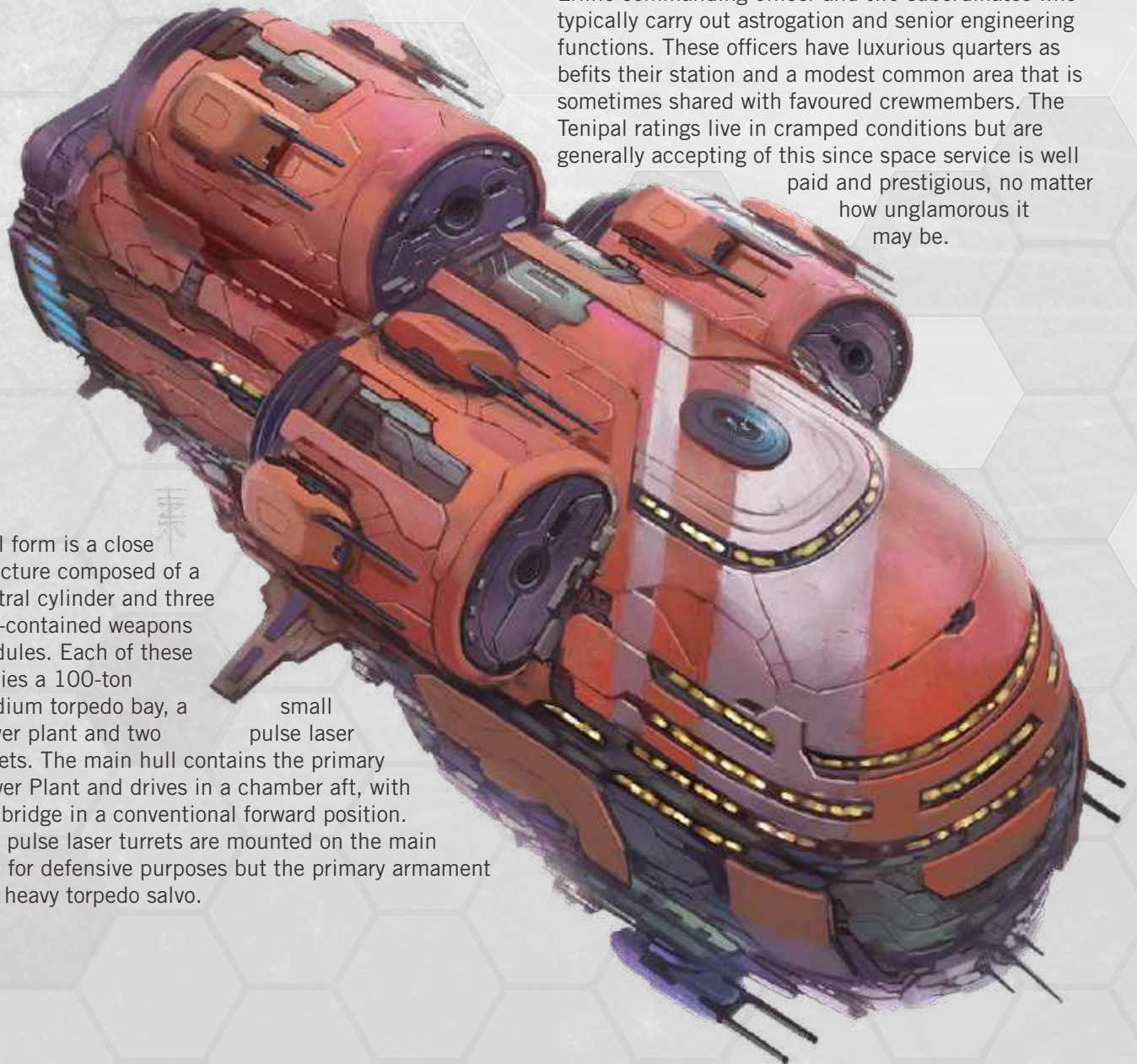
SOVREIGNDOMS NAVAL VESSEL

Whilst command vessels, and those intended to carry important personages, are generally equipped as standoff combat platforms, workhorse naval vessels built by the Sovereigns are optimised for close quarters. As with the Tenipal, whose vessels they have engaged from time-to-time, the Sovereigns have not always had their own way in combat. In particular, the low thrust of these vessels makes closing to torpedo range problematic.

These ships are survivable, with good armour for the region but do not carry reloads for their torpedo bays. Once the ready ammunition is expended, these vessels are expected to break off and return to their command ship for resupply. Keeping subordinate commanders dependent on their leaders is a deliberate tactic found throughout the Sovereigns in all areas, from industry to administration.

The crew of a typical vessel is mainly Tenipal, with an Erline commanding officer and two subordinates who typically carry out astrogation and senior engineering functions. These officers have luxurious quarters as befits their station and a modest common area that is sometimes shared with favoured crewmembers. The Tenipal ratings live in cramped conditions but are generally accepting of this since space service is well paid and prestigious, no matter how unglamorous it may be.

Hull form is a close structure composed of a central cylinder and three self-contained weapons modules. Each of these carries a 100-ton medium torpedo bay, a power plant and two small pulse laser turrets. The main hull contains the primary Power Plant and drives in a chamber aft, with the bridge in a conventional forward position. Two pulse laser turrets are mounted on the main hull for defensive purposes but the primary armament is a heavy torpedo salvo.



SOVREIGNDOMS NAVAL VESSEL

TL9		TONS	COST (MCr)
Hull	900 tons, Close Structure	—	40.5
Amour	Titanium Steel, Armour: 8	180	10.8
M-Drive	Thrust 1	9	18
J-Drive	Sovreigndoms Jump Drive, Jump 1	27.5	41.25
Power Plant	Fusion (TL8), Power 500	50	25
Fuel Tanks	J-1 x2, 16 weeks of operation	155	—
Bridge		20	4.5
Computer	Computer/10	—	0.16
Sensors	Civilian Grade	1	3
Weapons	Medium Torpedo Bays x3	300	18
	Dual Turrets (pulse lasers) x8	8	20
Systems	Fuel Processor (40 tons/day)	2	0.1
	Fuel Scoops	—	1
	Medical Bays x2	8	8
	Armoury	1	0.25
Staterooms	Luxury	10	1.5
	High x2	12	1.6
	Standard x12	48	6
Software	Library	—	—
	Manoeuvre/0	—	—
	Jump Control/1	—	0.1
Common Areas		60	6
Cargo		8.5	—
TOTAL: MCr 205.76			

CREW

CAPTAIN, ASTROGATOR,
PILOTS X3, ENGINEERS X3,
MEDIC X2, GUNNERS X14,
OFFICER X2

RUNNING COSTS

MAINTENANCE COST

Cr17146/month

.....

PURCHASE COST

MCr205.76

POWER REQUIREMENTS

90

MANOEUVRE
DRIVE

180

BASIC SHIP
SYSTEMS

90

JUMP DRIVE

1

SENSORS

87

WEAPONS

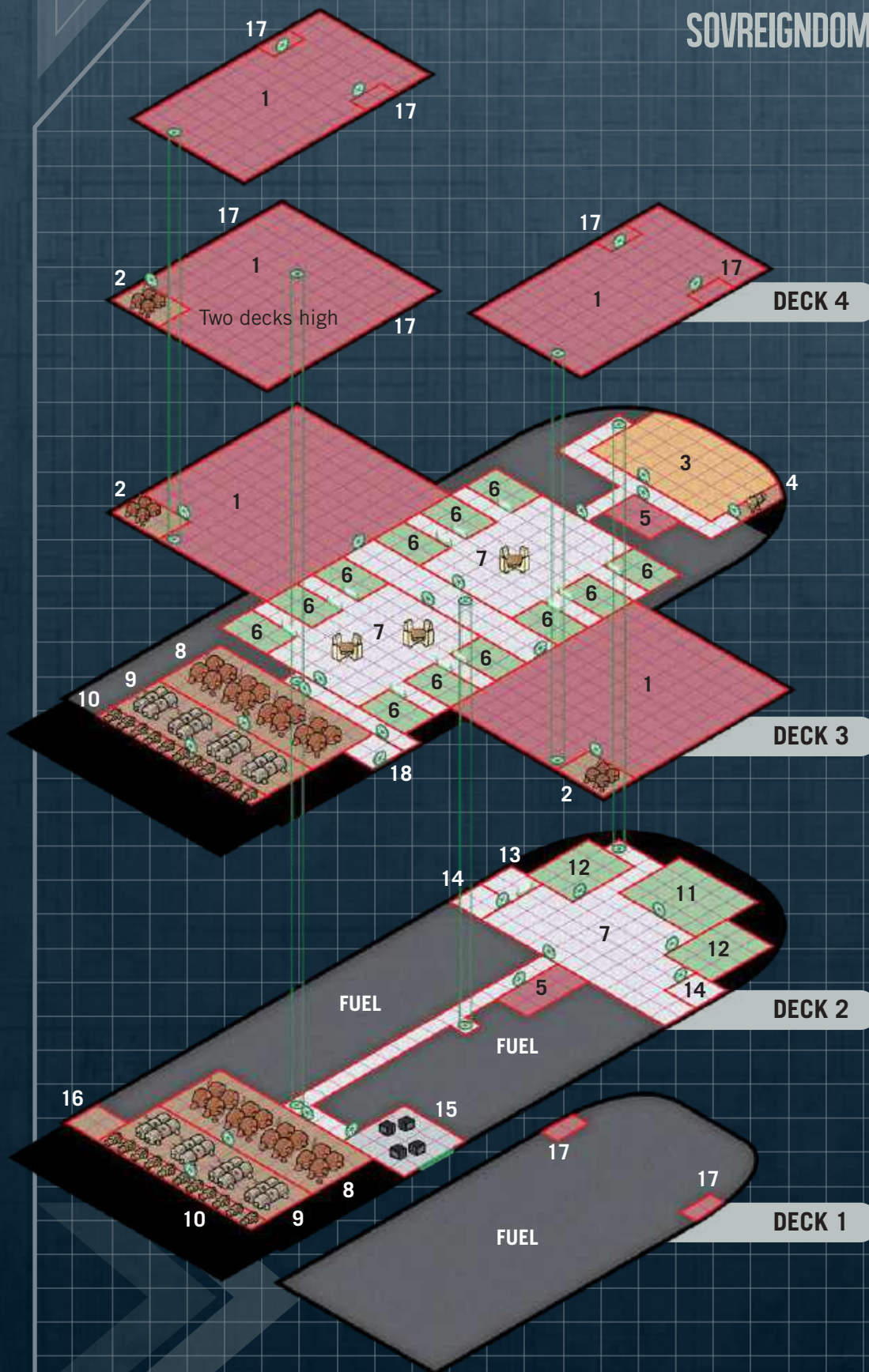
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HULL POINTS

SOVREIGNDOMS NAVAL VESSEL

LEGEND

1. Torpedo bay
2. Small power plant
3. Bridge
4. Sensors
5. Medical bay
6. Stateroom
7. Common area
8. Main power plant
9. Jump drive
10. Manoeuvre drive
11. Luxury stateroom
12. High stateroom
13. Fresher
14. Locker
15. Cargo hold
16. Fuel processor
17. Pulse laser turret
18. Airlock



HIGHGUARD: THE CITADELS

The Citadels are armed with weaponry that makes the most of their most abundant resource: rock. Two main weapon designs exist, one intended for bombardment of planetary targets and capable of inflicting heavy damage on a starship, the other used for close range defence.

CITADEL HEAVY MASS DRIVER CANNON

The Citadel heavy mass driver cannon is available only as a large bay weapon. It is capable of limited traverse and best suited to pounding planetary targets or engaging static installations such as a starport. In such a role the weapon normally fires large chunks of rock doing 4DD damage against spacegoing targets or ports and causing much greater destruction against ground targets if assisted by gravity. Hitting anything that can move with such ammunition is largely a matter of blind luck; DM-8 applies to targets at Medium range or beyond, increasing to DM-12 at Short range or closer. For ship-to-ship work a multiple projectile round is more commonly used. This halves the negative DM to attack rolls whilst reducing damage to 1DD.

The heavy mass driver cannon can also be used to deliver non-combat payloads and indeed was developed from a device used to launch packages of ore from mining platform to processing station. The Citadels may attack another craft by launching a cloud of metal-rich rock fragments to confuse sensors, along with several robotic units intended to clamp onto the enemy hull and begin causing damage. These units might also be used for reconnaissance, crawling over a hull without causing harm in order to collect information or provide tracking data for a follow-up strike.

CITADEL LIGHT MASS DRIVER ARRAY

The light mass driver array is carried in an oversized (25-ton) barbette, which mounts multiple small cannon. These discharge a mix of large and small projectiles contained in flimsy canisters, creating an effect not unlike grapeshot from a black powder cannon. The guns can fire together as a single salvo or in sequence, depending on the nature of the target. The array cannot slew quickly enough to track a fast-moving close range vessel but can be used to put a hail of projectiles on the projected path of a target. DM-2 applies to targets at Short range or less and the weapon's damage is halved at Long range or greater.



Weapon	TL	Range	Power	Damage	Cost	Traits
Heavy Mass Driver Bay	9	Very Long	100	4DD	MCr200	—
Light Mass Driver Array	9	Long	8	6D	MCr4	—

ON BOARD

Most equipment and tools in use by the Citadels is derived from what the Erline were using during their first starfaring era. Whilst surviving colonies have progressed, the Citadels are still using the same blueprints for the most part. There are exceptions, notably where equipment has proven inadequate or an unanticipated need has arisen but the Citadels do not innovate and will not replace something that works with an improved version unless the benefits are very considerable.

CITADEL MOBILE UNIT

The Mobile Unit is the standard robotic worker created by the Erline when they built the first Citadel. It vaguely resembles an Erline, with a central ovoid body and detachable accessory packs at the front and back. Three segmented legs ending in grippers extend from each flank and for microgravity work the unit has an internal gas-jet propulsion system. The aft accessory pack is generally used for parts and tool stowage, although it can be replaced with a more powerful thruster unit for operations in open space.

The front accessory pod resembles a head in many ways and mounts two or four manipulator arms in addition to sensors and instruments. On units intended for combat a laser, developed from a cutting tool, is mounted under the forward pack. This has a short effective range but is capable of cutting through most materials. If combat is expected, one or more of the manipulator arms can be equipped with a spike or blade and some tools used by these robots are very deadly. If no weapon is available the manipulator arms can still strike or rip at a target but are not very effective.

Mobile Units can scuttle on their six legs when operating in gravity but most of the time they operate

in a microgravity or low-g environment. Movement is by way of a series of leaps from one anchor point to another, in a manner both confusing and a little disturbing to most observers. A common tactic is to swarm a target, with individual units springing to walls and ceiling in a bewildering pattern as they approach. However, the behaviour of these robots is predictable once their nature is understood; if one robot in a swarm uses a particular anchor point it is likely the next one will, too. It is possible to aim at a particular spot and shoot Mobile Units as they pass through it – providing the prediction is correct, of course.



CITADEL MOBILE UNIT

ROBOT	HITS	SPEED	TL	COST
Mobile Unit	100	5m	9	—
SKILLS	Athletics (dexterity) 2, Gun Combat 0, Melee 0, Recon 0			
ATTACKS	Laser (3D), Combat Accessory (2D), Manipulator Arm (1D)			
TRAITS	Armour (+6)			
PROGRAMMING	Worker or Hunter/Killer			

SWARMS

SIZE OF SWARM	DM TO DETECT AND HIT	NOTES
Less than 10	–8	Treat as individual targets
11–20	–4	
21–50	–2	
51–100	0	
100+	—	A large force is usually separated into multiple swarms

Robot Attack

The Mobile Units deployed by the Citadels are capable of landing on a hull and causing damage with what were originally repair tools. To do so they must reach the target vessel. A robot attack can only be launched from within 1,000 kilometres and is normally made by a swarm rather than a single unit. However, it is possible that one or more units might sneak onto the hull as the Travellers pass close to their launch point. A swarm is likely to be detected but an individual robot or a small number might not be noticed until they start to cut into the hull.

A swarm will consist of more than 10 robots and may theoretically be of any size. However, a very large attack will normally be grouped into several swarms. The size of the swarm dictates how hard it is to detect, track and hit with weapons, as shown on the Swarms table. Individual robots are extremely hard to hit with most weapons but can be engaged normally by point-defence weapons once detected.

A swarm will take 2D starship combat rounds to reach a target, with DM+4 if the range is more than 100 kilometres and DM+8 if more than 250 kilometres. Attacks of this sort will not be launched beyond 1,000 kilometres as they are unlikely to reach the target.

Engagement of individual robots is extremely difficult as starship turrets are not intended to be used against what are essentially personnel targets. However, a swarm can be thinned with beam weapons or by detonating missiles in their midst. This is something of a brute force approach but can be effective. Targeting a swarm is a matter of putting shots where they are most likely to hit some of the robots and swarms are reduced by a proportion of their strength.

Missiles, torpedoes, lasers and plasma or fusion guns can be used to thin a swarm. Larger ships tend to have more weapons but are also bigger targets, allowing a

swarm to be more dispersed. Targeting a swarm absorbs the full attention of weapons and their gunners for 1D rounds unless the swarm reaches the target before this period ends. If so, the full effects of defensive fire are applied and weapons are free to engage something else once the swarm arrives.

Each type of weapon is applied to a swarm separately. An attempt to thin a swarm requires an Average (8+) Gunner check. Failure indicates the fire was ineffective, although some of the robots may have been disabled. Beam weapons, including plasma and fusion guns, roll damage on D3s rather than their normal dice, and reduce the swarm by a percentage equal to the Effect of the attack, multiplied by the damage rolled. Missiles and torpedoes roll damage normally and reduce the number of robots by a percentage equal to Effect x damage.

For example, the Travellers detect a swarm of 60 robots incoming from a range of 500 kilometres. A 2D roll with DM+8 for range indicates the swarm will take 12 rounds to arrive. The Travellers order their missile batteries to detonate multiple warheads in the midst of the swarm. This absorbs the missile gunners attention for 1D rounds – in this case 2 – and the Gunner check is a failure. The barrage is ineffective. A second attempt is made, taking another four rounds and produces an Effect of 3. Rolling 4D for the missiles' damage the Travellers get 12, multiplied by Effect 3 to give 36% casualties among the 60 robots. With 22 units now down, the swarm still has 38 robots and is six rounds from contact. The Travellers have time for at least one more missile salvo or might decide to bring other weapons to bear as well. Of course, these weapons are not firing at other targets whilst they are trying to stop the incoming swarm.

Assuming the attack is detected at all, point defence fire may be directed against it in the final round before contact. Any number of individual robots or swarms can be engaged with point defence, with each point of intercept rating taking out one robot. This means

SWARM DAMAGE

Damage Effect	Cost
1 Hull Point	10
Impose temporary DM-1 on sensor-related tasks including gunnery	25
Induce random system Defect	100
Trash antennae imposing permanent DM-1 on sensor-related tasks including gunnery	250
Reduce Armour by 1 point	500

the only chance to get a single robot through the point defences is to avoid detection, although it is always possible that one or more members of a swarm might not be picked up on sensors. Point defence fire may be less effective if a swarm is launched from very close range or if it is not detected until the last moment.

Once robots are on the hull they can begin to attack the ship, most likely antennae, sensors and weapon mounts, and to seek a way into the hull. Robots may also begin cutting away sections of plating, inflicting damage directly to Hull points.

Every hour there are robots on the hull, the Referee should roll 2D to determine how much damage is done and multiply the result by the number of robots remaining. These points can be 'spent' by the Referee to cause damage to the ship's hull and systems, as shown on the Swarm Damage table.

For example, 38 robots are rampaging unopposed about the hull. The Referee rolls a 5 on 2D and has $38 \times 5 = 190$ points to spend on damage and decides the robots have caused a random Defect (100 points), minor damage to sensors and antennae imposing DM-2 on related tasks for the next hour (50 points) and cut holes in the hull totalling 4 Hull points. If the robots are stopped or the Referee decides to apply the next set of damage elsewhere the negative DM on sensors-related

tasks ceases to apply. Some minor repairs will be needed but in the meantime the crew can work around the damage.

Anti-Swarm Weapons

Getting robots off the hull probably requires going outside and destroying them manually, although there are other options. The Travellers might come up with a way of repelling them by magnetising the hull or something equally esoteric, or maybe setting up remote controlled anti-personnel turrets on the hull to pick off intruders. Developing such a system would be a research project and will then require some fairly extensive work on the hull to implement. Plans to create clever effects like a repulsion field will be much harder than simply building a device or weapon but will likely be more elegant and less prone to damage over time.

The most effective anti-swarm weapon might be a specialised sandcaster round designed to act like a giant shotgun. Developing this is a Typical, Average research project. Once completed, the Travellers can get someone to build ammunition for them or fabricate it themselves. Sandcaster-shotguns can be used only in the last round before a swarm lands and do 6D damage multiplied by the Effect of a Gunner check. This weapon is similar to a pebble sandcaster round but optimised for use against the swarms.



HIGHGUARD: ERLINE WORLDS

The Erline Worlds make use of standard shipboard components for the most part, although with an emphasis on automation and remote operations. Crewmembers carry out most of their tasks from the safety of control chambers, whilst automated systems or mobile robots carry out their instructions.

ERLINE PLASMA CANNON

The plasma cannon is normally encountered as a barbette-mounted weapon, although a larger bay version is used on some vessels. It is a close range, inaccurate but powerful weapon system well suited to mass attacks by remotely controlled and therefore expendable craft. The plasma cannon is essentially a Prototype version

of the plasma barbette found on page 25 of *High Guard*, with the Inaccurate drawback. Other species in the region could reverse engineer this weapon but this would be considered an Early Prototype and would gain an additional disadvantage. See page 49 of *High Guard* for details.

Weapon	TL	Range	Power	Damage	Cost	Traits
Plasma Cannon Barbette	10	Medium	15	4D-2	MCr25	—
Medium Plasma Cannon Bay	10	Medium	60	16D	MCr50	—

ERLINE WORLDS GENERAL-SERVICE STARSHIP

The Erline Worlds tend to use general-purpose starships, tailoring them to the task at hand by altering the subordinate craft carried. Most of these craft are remotely controlled from the parent vessel, including interface shuttles carrying crew and supplies. The latter have a cockpit for emergency use but the Erline mindset is actually more comfortable knowing the ship is under the control of someone in a remote and secure location. Combat craft are almost always remotely directed, with immediate decisions made by the craft's computer and the crew supplying big-picture direction. Thus a strike boat might be directed to make an attack pass on a particular enemy vessel but will handle evasion and targeting itself.

Hull form resembles a heavily armoured egg with a pair of cylinders along the sides. The central hull houses critical systems such as drives and power plant, with a command room for subordinate craft located close to the bridge. Accommodation is also deep within the armoured hull, arranged in small blocks separated

by common areas. Exactly how accommodation is distributed depends on the vessel's role; it is common for a ship to operate with just a handful of gunners, creating extra space for scientists on a research mission or diplomats, passengers and the like.

The design is very energy-tight, requiring the manoeuvre drive to be shut off in order to jump and cargo capacity is limited as these ships are not intended to be freighters. When cargo is carried, it is normally left aboard the remote-controlled lighters that convey it to the ship, creating a capacity of over 300 tons in the hangar. This is still not a great deal but suffices for most non-commercial purposes. Armament is relatively heavy for a general-purpose ship but these vessels are also the warships of the Erline Worlds. Armament can vary but typically each cylinder has a 100-ton bay at the fore end, containing a plasma cannon and missile system on standard-configuration vessels. A defensive laser armament is scattered across the hull.

GENERAL-SERVICE STARSHIP



TL10		TONS	COST (MCR)
Hull	3,000 tons, Close Structure	—	135
Amour	Crystalliron, Armour: 12	450	72
M-Drive	Thrust 2	60	120
J-Drive	Erline Jump Drive, Jump 2	155	232.5
Power Plant	Fusion (TL8), Power 1500	150	75
Fuel Tanks	J-2, 16 weeks of operation	660	—
Bridge		60	15
	Sensor Stations x8	8	4
Computer	Core/50	—	60
Sensors	Military Grade	2	4.1
Weapons	Medium Missile Bay	100	25
	Medium Plasma Cannon Bay	100	50
	Dual Turrets (pulse lasers) x24	24	60
Systems	Fuel Processor (200 tons/day)	10	0.5
	Fuel Scoops	—	1
	Full Hangar (400 tons)	800	160
	Medical Bays x2	8	8
	Armouries x2	2	0.5
Staterooms	High x4	24	3.2
	Standard x48	192	18
Software	Library	—	—
	Manoeuvre/0	—	—
	Jump Control/2	—	0.2
	Advanced Fire Control/1	—	12
	Battle System/1	—	18
	Electronic Warfare/1	—	15
	Launch Solution/2	—	12
	Virtual Crew/0	—	1
	Virtual Gunner/0	—	1
Common Areas		120	12
Cargo		75	—
TOTAL: MCR 1115			

CREW

CAPTAIN, ASTROGATOR,
PILOTS X3, ENGINEERS
X11, MAINTENANCE X3,
MEDIC X2, GUNNERS X26,
OFFICERS X2

RUNNING COSTS

MAINTENANCE COST
CR92916/month

PURCHASE COST
MCR1115

POWER REQUIREMENTS

600

MANOEUVRE
DRIVE

600

BASIC SHIP
SYSTEMS

600

JUMP DRIVE

2

SENSORS

286

WEAPONS

1,320

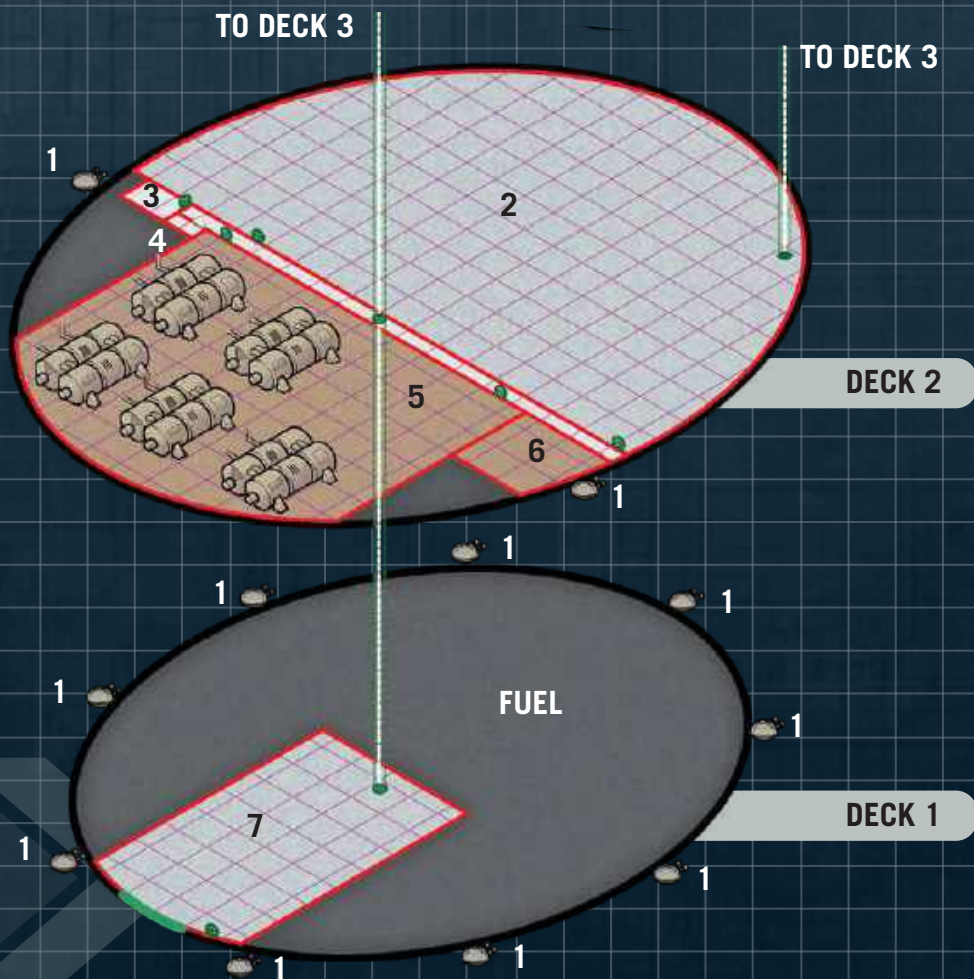
HULL POINTS

GENERAL SERVICE STARSHIP



LEGEND

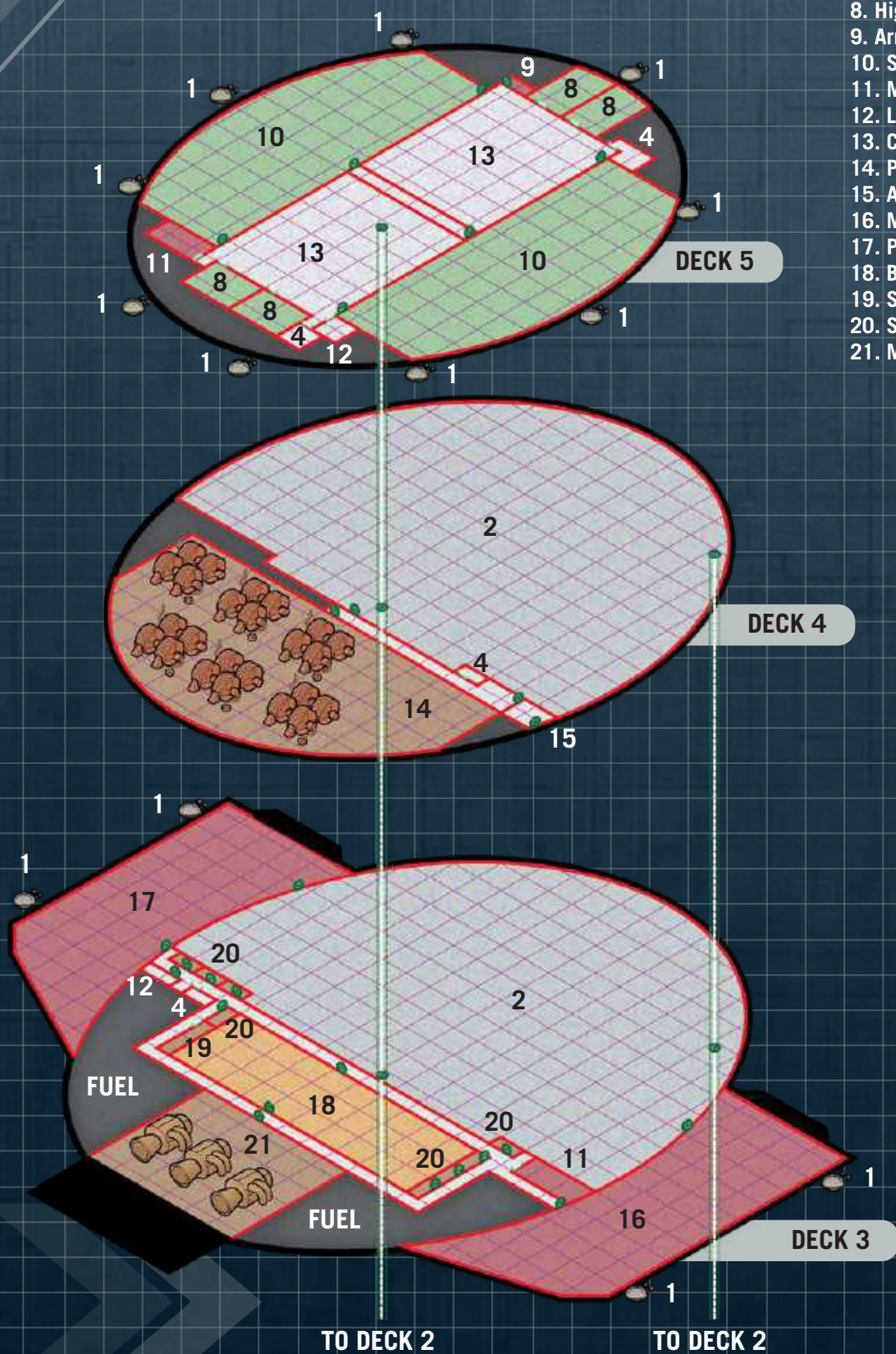
- 1. Pulse laser turret
- 2. Hangar
- 3. Storage
- 4. Fresher
- 5. Jump drive
- 6. Fuel processor
- 7. Cargo hold



1 Square = 2 Tons

LEGEND

- 8. High stateroom
- 9. Armoury
- 10. Staterooms
- 11. Medical bay
- 12. Locker
- 13. Common area
- 14. Power plant
- 15. Air lock
- 16. Missile bay
- 17. Plasma cannon bay
- 18. Bridge
- 19. Sensors
- 20. Sensor station
- 21. Manoeuvre drive



ERLINE WORLDS

COMBAT DRONE CRAFT

Many types of combat drone craft are deployed by the Erline World. This variant is designed to carry a plasma barrette as close as possible to a target and overwhelm it. Although heavily armoured and expensive, these drone craft are ultimately considered expendable. The m-drive is an early-prototype version, power hungry and large for its output, and has been known to be unstable when running at more than 2g thrust. Standard procedure is to operate the drive at low levels until well clear of the parent vessel and abandon any drones that show signs of instability. In combat this can mean expending them as decoys or by ramming enemy craft.

The 40-ton combat drone is the smallest that can carry a plasma barrette. This results in a considerable amount of empty space within the craft, which is sometimes used for cargo. A variant of this drone, with a more conventional 2g manoeuvre drive, is often used as a cargo transport with a capacity of 31 tons or may be fitted with an emergency cockpit and passenger accommodation. The heavy hull armour and oversized power plant remain constant. Although this makes the small craft of the Erline Worlds expensive, it is in keeping with the Erline attitude of distancing themselves as much as possible from any task.



COMBAT DRONE CRAFT

TL10		TONS	COST (MCr)
Hull	40 tons, standard	—	2
Amour	Crystalliron, Armour: 12	6	1.44
M-Drive	Thrust 3	1.6	3.2
Power Plant	Fusion (TL8), Power 50	5	2.5
Fuel Tanks	4 weeks of operation	1	—
Bridge	None – Remote Operations Only	—	—
Computer	Computer/10	—	0.16
Sensors	Civilian Grade	1	3
Weapons	Plasma Cannon Barbette	5	25
Software	Manoeuvre/0	—	—
	Fire Control/1	—	2
	Virtual Crew/0	—	1
	Virtual Gunner/0	—	5
Cargo		22.5	—
TOTAL: MCr120.96			



CREW

NONE

RUNNING COSTS

MAINTENANCE COST

Cr10080/month

• • • • •

PURCHASE COST

MCr120.96

POWER REQUIREMENTS

8

BASIC SHIP
SYSTEMS

1

SENSORS

21

MANOEUVRE
DRIVE

15

WEAPONS

16

HULL POINTS

ERLINE WORLDS EQUIPMENT

The forces and personnel of the Erline Worlds use variants of standard equipment optimised for their own physical structure. These are not entirely incompatible with humanoid species but are awkwardly shaped. Equipment meant for the Erline imposes DM-1 on all physical tasks if used by a human or Tenipal and vice versa. Many Erline tools and weapons are designed for mounting on robots or remote devices and have no grips or other means for a person to hold them. Such items would have to be fitted with improvised handles, shafts and other ergonomic features before they could be used at all, although will function normally once this is done.

ERLINE COMBAT WALKER

The combat walker is a typical Erline vehicle, oversized for its function and designed to deploy tools and weapons to carry out its main tasks whilst keeping the crew safe. It vaguely resembles an Erline in shape and configuration, with an ovoid central body and three segmented legs at each side. These are used for a curious mode of locomotion combining rolling on wheels with stepping over or around obstacles. The walker can ride very high on near-straight legs or hunker down to hide from enemy fire.

The crew of two ride in a central compartment deep within the vehicle's armoured body, controlling weapon systems remotely. Standard armament is a light laser cannon in a turret on the dorsal surface of the main body, although this can vary, with four smaller turrets carrying whatever weapons seem most useful. Two turrets are mounted low at the front and back of the main body, allowing fire at targets underneath the walker, whilst the flank or waist turrets are mounted higher and can fire forward, back or out to the sides.

The turret arrangement gives all-round defensive fire capability. It is common to mount a mix of armament in the flank turrets; typically a light laser weapon or autocannon for defence against light vehicles and personnel, plus anti-aircraft or anti-armour missiles. The front and rear turrets normally carry light lasers or autocannon for direct fire. The cost of the vehicle includes a light laser canon in the main turret but no weapons in the smaller ones. Each can hold four Spaces of weapons and the cost of these Spaces has been accounted for. Only the price of the weapon itself need be paid.

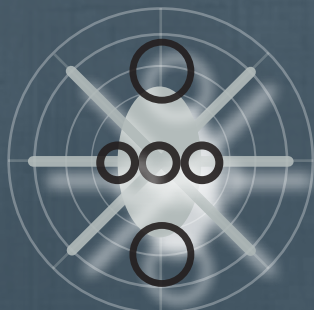


ARMOUR

FRONT 50

REAR 40

SIDES 45



ERLINE COMBAT WALKER

TL	10
SKILL	DRIVE (WALKER)
AGILITY	+3
SPEED (CRUISE)	SLOW (VERY SLOW)
RANGE (CRUISE)	450 (675)
CREW	2
PASSENGERS	—
CARGO	0.25 TONS
HULL	90
SHIPPING	15 TONS
COST	MCR2.64

TRAITS

AFV

Autopilot (skill level)	2
Communications (range)	500km
Navigation (Navigation DM)	+2
Sensors (Electronics (sensors) DM)	—
Camouflage (Recon DM)	—
Stealth (Electronics (sensors) DM)	-1

EQUIPMENT AND WEAPONS

Anti-Missile System (laser), Autopilot (enhanced), Communications System (improved, encrypted), Computer/2, Control System (enhanced), Decoy Dispenser, ECM (improved), Fire Extinguishers, Life Support (short term), Mini-Galley, Navigation System (improved), Sensors (improved, hardened), Smart Wheels.

Large Turret (light laser cannon)
Small Turrets (4 Spaces, enhanced fire control) x 4

Weapon	Range	Damage	Magazine	Magazine Cost	Traits	Fire Control
Light Laser Cannon	2	8D	—	—	AP 5	+3
Anti-Missile Laser	0.5	1D	—	—	Auto 3	—

THE NSY-S REGION



NSY-S Alpha

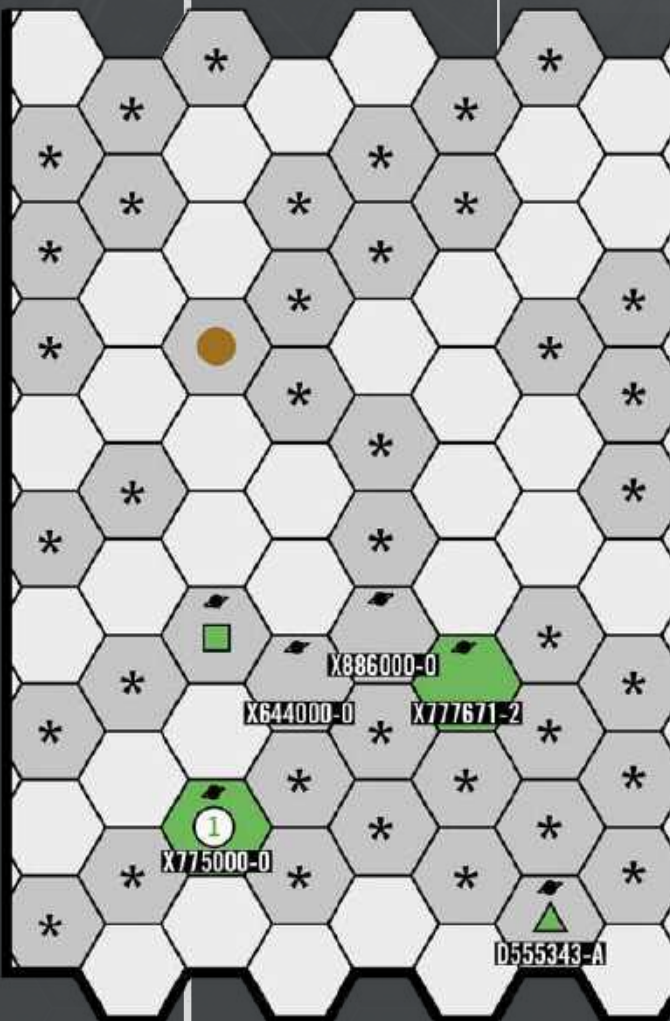
Sovereigndom	Red Giant Star
Tenipal Alliance	Gas Giant
NSY-S System	Sovereigndom Outpost

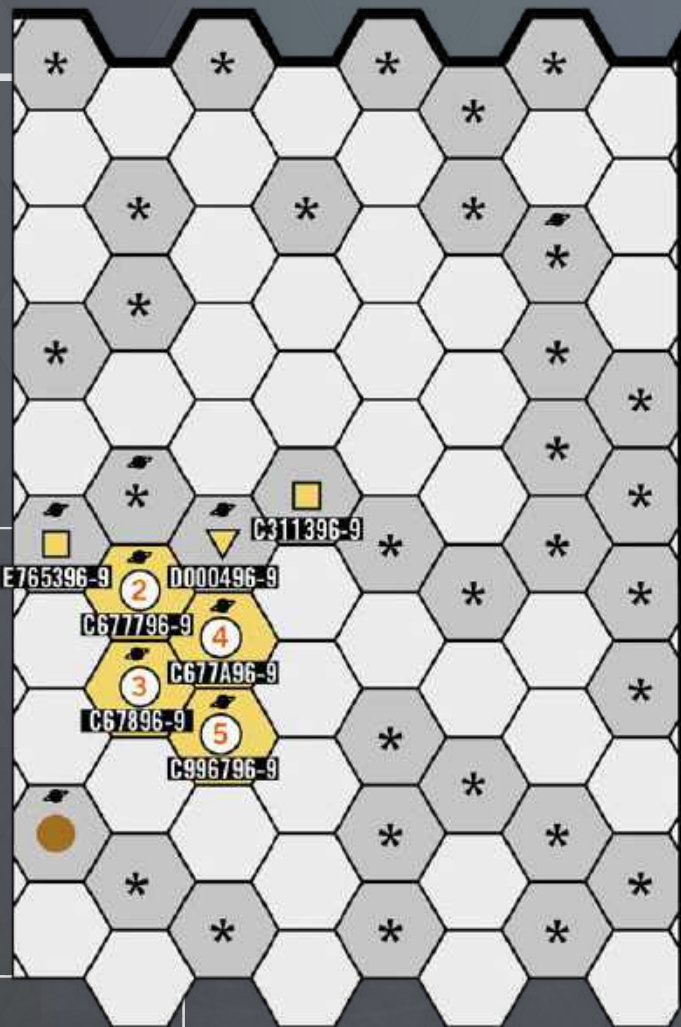
- 1 Sovereigndom-of-Eskath
Sovereigndom-of-Teile
- 2 Sovereigndom-of-Extcl
- 3 Sovereigndom-of-Ernl
- 4 Sovereigndom-of-Elhy
- 1 Claimed-in-Hope

NSY-S Gamma

Erline World	Brown Dwarf System
NSY-S System	Gas Giant
Erline Colony	Erline Research Outpost

1 Erline





NSY-S Beta

Tenipal Alliance

NSY-S System

Tenipal Spaceport

Brown Dwarf System

Gas Giant

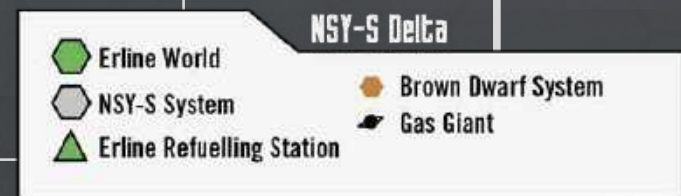
Tenipal Outpost

2 Gritty-Air

3 Centre-of-Complexity
Far-And-Separate

4 Home-of-Tenipal
Ice-Pond
Not-Good
Ambitious-Place
Mining-Port

5 Heavy-Air



NSY-S Delta

Erline World

NSY-S System

Erline Refuelling Station

Brown Dwarf System

Gas Giant

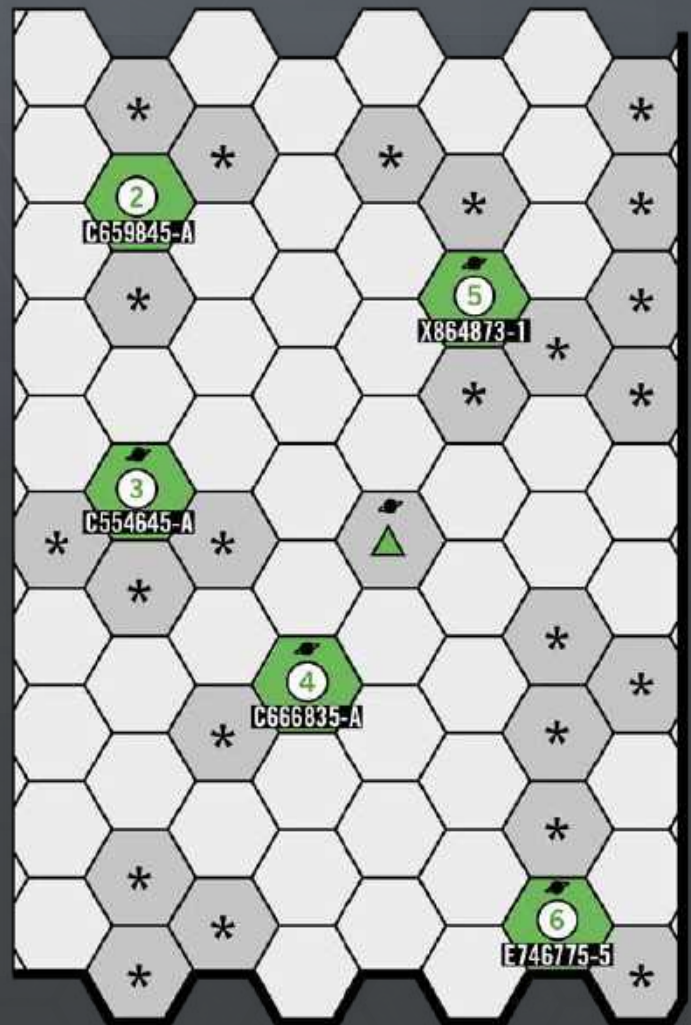
2 Zrenh

3 Czath

4 Zahline

5 Klatkl Colony

6 Kskatk Colony



NSY-S-ALPHA

NSY-S Alpha is an arbitrary region the size of a standard subsector, mapped by routine navigational sweep. In most cases the survey has identified the presence of stars and stellar phenomena, with little else. As the Travellers explore, they will discover more about the region and its inhabitants and may find themselves backtracking in order to learn the truth about rumours or dubious information presented by one of the factions.

The Referee should be aware that this 'subsector sized region' does not have to correspond to a formal subsector. It might lie at the junction of two, or even four subsectors, although that can be inconvenient for mapping in the longer term and should be avoided if possible. Hereafter, it is assumed that this region will be treated as a standard subsector. Since the NSY-S region is surrounded by uncharted space it does not really matter how it fits with the rest of the Traveller universe, although position relative to NSY-S Beta and NSY-S Gamma will be important.

NSY-S Alpha contains a number of worlds dominated by the Sovereigns. Their ships can be encountered throughout the subsector and sometimes beyond. Since each Sovereignty is independent and autonomous, there is no guarantee that vessels or outposts owned by any particular one will know about the arrival of *Deepnight Revelation* in the region unless there has been an interaction with that Sovereignty before.

The Travellers may give any designation they feel like to the star systems of this region. By default, the convention is region/subsector/nominal hex location. For example, if the Travellers are not feeling imaginative, and do not assign a name of their own, their space sciences team will designate the system at hex 0101 as NSY-S Alpha 0101. Since the language of the Erline and the Sovereigns does not translate well to Anglic, Travellers may well find themselves using their own designations even after the local one is known.

Basic stellar data is provided on the NSY-S-Alpha table. Systems deserving a short or full writeup are detailed below. All stars are main sequence unless otherwise noted.

NSY-S ALPHA 0202

The Alpha 0202 system is one of many binaries in the subsector. Its primary system is home to two Sovereigns. Of these, Sovereignty-of-Eskath is significantly more powerful and claims two other worlds in the system. The names of these in the tongue of the Sovereigns seem to be identical, although some nuance undetectable to outsiders may set them apart.

The Sovereignty-of-Eskath operates numerous starships, some of which range beyond the local cluster. The Sovereignty-of-Teile is confined to a single world but fiercely maintains its independence. Indeed, the imperative to resist pressure to become subordinate may cause the sovereign to seek outside assistance or join a multi-state endeavour in return for support.

NSY-S ALPHA 0202 PRIMARY (F3 Star)

- Primary 1/Sovereignty-of-Eskath (C6658A7-9)
- Primary 2 (Low-Density Terrestrial)
- Primary 3/Sovereignty-of-Teile (C8535A7-9)
- Primary 4/Possession-of-Eskath (E510367-9)
- Primary 5/Possession-of-Eskath (E310267-9)
- Primary 6 (X100000-O)
- Primary 7 (X111000-O)
- Primary 8 (Small Gas Giant)
- Primary 9 (X420000-O)
- Primary 10 (Small Gas Giant)
- Primary 11 (Small Gas Giant)

NSY-S ALPHA 0202 SECONDARY (K7 Star)

- Secondary 1 (X4A1000-O)
- Secondary 2 (X310000-O)
- Secondary 3 (Small Gas Giant)
- Secondary 4 (Large Gas Giant)
- Secondary 5 (Large Gas Giant)
- Secondary 6 (Large Gas Giant)

NSY-S ALPHA 0205

The sparse binary system of Alpha 0205 contains only one terrestrial planet, although there are moons orbiting five gas giants. The mainworld is a small chunk of rock with a minimal atmosphere of unbreathable gases but its possession of water, in the form of ice, made it desirable for colonisation. Today, the world is a Sovereignty, although its small industrial base ensures its importance remains low. Apart from a few

NSY-S-Alpha

HEX	SYSTEM TYPE	STARS
0101	Solo	M5
0102	Trinary	K7 with M2 close companion and M6 distant companion
0103	Binary	G6 with M6 distant companion
0105	Binary	Brown dwarf with brown dwarf distant companion
0108	Binary	K8 with M8 distant companion
0109	Binary	G5 with M8 distant companion
0202	Binary	F3 with K7 distant companion
0205	Binary	K5 with M9 distant companion
0206	Solo	K4
0303	Binary	M6 with M5 close companion
0305	Solo	M5
0401	Trinary	K4 with M4 close companion and K5 distant companion
0405	Binary	K0 with K2 distant companion
0406	Binary	M5 with M2 distant companion
0407	Solo	K7
0408	Binary	K1 with K3 distant companion
0409	Solo	G4
0502	Binary	G3 with M5 distant companion
0504	Trinary	K5 with G7 close companion and brown dwarf distant companion
0507	Binary	M5 with K3 distant companion
0510	Binary	M7 with brown dwarf distant companion
0602	Solo	K5
0607	Trinary	M3 with M3 close companion and K3 distant companion
0608	Solo	F3
0610	Solo	A9
0701	Binary	G3 with brown dwarf distant companion
0702	Solo	G8
0706	Solo	K7
0801	Solo	M6 Giant
0802	Binary	G9 with brown dwarf distant companion
0803	Trinary	M9 with M3 close companion and M8 distant companion
0804	Trinary	K4 with M7 close companion and M7 distant companion
0809	Solo	F2
0810	Solo	M3

specialist communities the entire planetary population dwells in a single city at the north pole, surrounded by an extensive region of robotic mining outposts and underground hydroponic farms.

NSY-S ALPHA 0205 PRIMARY (K5 Star)

- Primary 1 (Small Gas Giant)
- Primary 2 (Small Gas Giant)
- Primary 3/Sovereigndom-of-Extcl (C4225A7-9)
- Primary 4 (Small Gas Giant)

NSY-S ALPHA 0205 SECONDARY (M9 Star)

- Secondary 1 (Large Gas Giant)
- Secondary 2 (Small Gas Giant)

NYS-S ALPHA 0407

The Alpha 0407 system has no gas giants and only a handful of terrestrial planets with modest natural resources. Nevertheless, it is home to one of the most powerful of the Sovereigndoms. The mainworld is dry but habitable, with cities spread over much of its surface, and there are outposts on other bodies of the system.

Sovereigndom-of-Ernli possesses what may be the best starport in the region, possibly meriting a Class B rating on the standard scale. Orbital facilities are not nearly so extensive as the rating suggests, although there are orbital construction yards that produce ships for the sovereign and any others who can afford the prices. The system is heavily guarded – by local standards at least – with squadrons of small carrier-monitors operating fighter craft crewed by Tenipal pilots. Ships from Sovereigndom-of-Ernli are common throughout the local main and sometimes make the crossing into NSY-S Beta.

NSY-S ALPHA 0407 PRIMARY (K7 Star)

- Primary 1 (D000368-9)
- Primary 2 (D221368-9)
- Primary 3/Sovereigndom-of-Ernli (B6747A8-9)
- Primary 4 (D62A468-9)
- Primary 5 (D3A0268-9)

NSY-S ALPHA 0504

The Alpha 0504 system contains only one true terrestrial planet. Another body is in the process of breaking up and there are indications that the planetoid belt in the third orbit may be another result of whatever interaction caused this. The system is officially uninhabited but there is a small refuelling station in orbit around the second gas giant. The station has changed hands many times and has been claimed by several Sovereigndoms but never remained aligned with any of them for long. It is of little importance other than as a refuelling stop for ships making the voyage out to spinward-coreward and as a neutral location for sensitive negotiations.

NSY-S 0504 PRIMARY B (G7 Star)

- AB 1 (Small Gas Giant)
- AB 2 (Small Gas Giant)
- AB 3 (X000000-0)
- AB 4 (Unstable Terrestrial)
- AB 5 (X310000-0)
- AB 6 (Large Gas Giant)
- AB 7 (Small Gas Giant)
- AB 8 (Small Gas Giant)

NSY-S 0504 PRIMARY A (K5 Star)

NSY-S 0504 SECONDARY (Brown Dwarf)

- Secondary 1 (Large Gas Giant)

NSY-S ALPHA 0510

The Alpha 0510 system centres on an M7 (red) main sequence star, with a large brown dwarf in an eccentric distant orbit. The system contains several terrestrial planets, one of which is in the process of breaking up to become a second planetoid belt. The entire system is claimed by the Sovereigndom-of-Elhy but only one planet besides its homeworld is permanently inhabited. The Sovereigndom maintains a small fleet of home-built vessels, most of which are used for local operations in the nearby main. Temporary mining or research outposts have been set up in several systems and it is possible that at some point one or more of these will be developed into a colony. For the present, however, only the home system is considered worth expending any effort on defending.

NSY-S ALPHA 0510 PRIMARY (M7 Star)

- Primary 1 (Small Gas Giant)
- Primary 2 (Large Gas Giant)
- Primary 3/Sovereigndom-of-Elhy (C6657A7-9)
- Primary 4/Possession-of-Elhy (D6004A7-9)
- Primary 5 (X7A2000-0)
- Primary 6 (Unstable Terrestrial)
- Primary 7 (Large Gas Giant)
- Primary 8 (X000000-0)
- Primary 9 (X5A1000-0)

NSY-S ALPHA 0510 SECONDARY (Brown Dwarf)

- Secondary 1 (X521000-0)

NSY-S ALPHA 0706

The Alpha 0706 system is the spinwardmost possession of the Tenipal Alliance, whose core territory lies in NSY-S Beta. The system contains three large and one smaller terrestrial planets, as well as a gas giant and planetoid belt. The system represents a high-value possession that was settled, with much difficulty, by jump-1 ships staging across from the Beta subsector. Landings have been made on other bodies but only Claimed-in-Hope is of any real interest to the Tenipal.

Claimed-in-Hope is a small and rather ramshackle colony consisting of just a few thousand Tenipal with little industrial base or economic output. The effort required to establish the colony was under-estimated, necessitating the transfer of assets from other projects to avoid complete collapse. As a result, expansion of the colony has been severely limited.

The problem of finding additional funding for the colony has been exacerbated by a series of incursions from the Sovereigndoms, whose ships have made landings on various bodies in the system in spite of warnings to stay away. Groundside mapping has taken place, suggesting the Sovereigndoms intend to place a colony of their own. In addition, a 'goodwill' visit to the colony on Claimed-in-Hope ended in violence when some of the colonists attacked the landing party. The Tenipal were trying to liberate cousins 'enslaved' by the Sovereigndoms but were fired upon by them in self-defence.

The incident has increased tensions between the Sovereigndoms and Tenipal Alliance, which responded by deploying armed craft to the system. It is difficult to support these, further draining funds that might otherwise be spent on developing the colony. There have been live-fire incidents, although most have ended with one ship taking minor damage and retiring. At present both sides seem content to skirmish and gain experience in space combat and there are no clear signs of impending escalation.

NSY-S ALPHA 0706 PRIMARY (K7 Star)

- Primary 1 (X422000-0)
- Primary 2/Claimed-in-Hope (EA67496-9)
- Primary 3 (X721000-0)
- Primary 4 (XAA3000-0)
- Primary 5 (Large Gas Giant)
- Primary 6 (X000000-0)

NSY-S ALPHA 0801

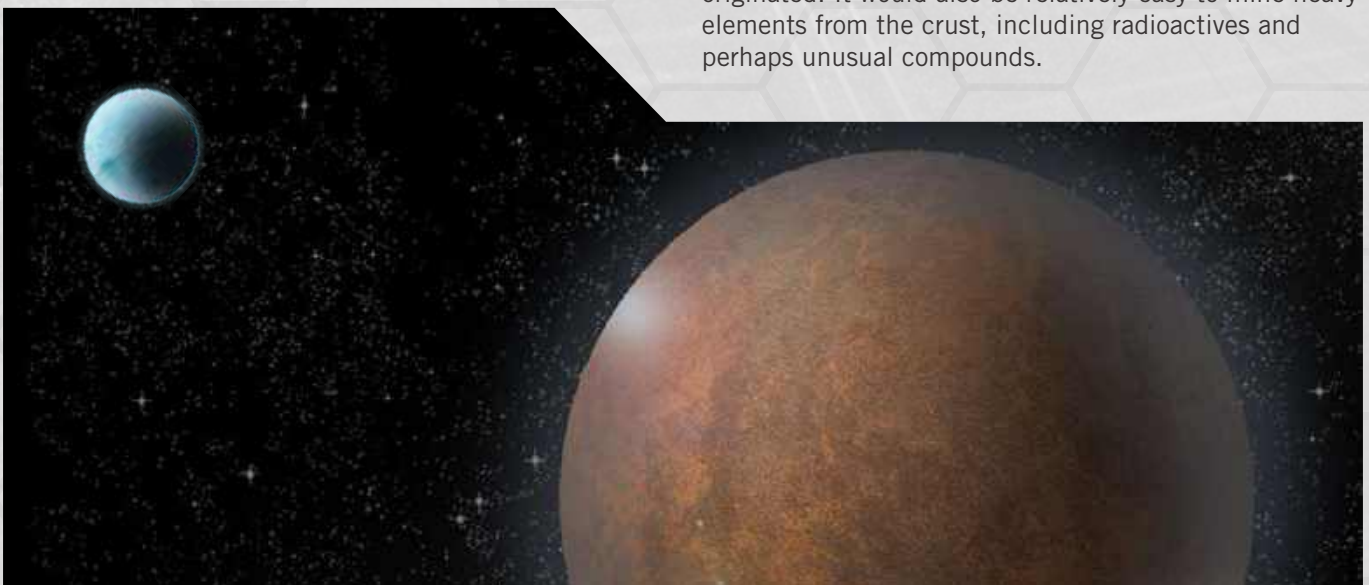
The Alpha 0801 system centres on a relatively young red giant star. It has just – in stellar terms – finished its expansion phase and should be settling into a stable period as a giant. However, it is prone to frequent, if minor, nova events, which suggests this star may be an uncomfortable neighbour for the next few million years. The events are not powerful enough to cause significant harm in neighbouring systems but semi-regular ejections of matter are accompanied by intense bursts of radio-frequency noise and other emissions which serve as a navigational reference point.

The inner system was swallowed by the star during expansion, leaving a couple of former iceball worlds and a small gas giant as the only planetary bodies. These are routinely hammered by hot gas from the star's corona, rendering both their structure and orbits unstable.

NSY-S ALPHA 0809

Alpha 0809 is, at first appearance, a lonely star with no planetary bodies. However, closer inspection indicates it is orbited by a small gas giant with one extremely dense moon. The gas giant's orbit is eccentric and extremely elliptical, suggesting it may be a captured body. It is, at present, very far from the primary and will soon begin its long inward transit to pass close before sweeping out again. It is possible the moon is the core of a second gas giant, perhaps once forming a binary pair with the survivor. If so, these two bodies were ejected from a distant system long ago and voyaged together for millennia.

With a surface gravity of 1.2gs and a high density, the moon is not especially dangerous to land on. Its composition might yield interesting data on gas giant core formation or conditions wherever the two bodies originated. It would also be relatively easy to mine heavy elements from the crust, including radioactives and perhaps unusual compounds.



NSY-S-BETA

NSY-S Beta is assumed to lie directly to trailing of NSY-S Alpha. This is subject to some flexibility; the Referee may find it desirable to insert other star systems between the two, or possibly even whole subsectors if a very large campaign area is deemed necessary. However, spreading the four subsectors of this segment of the campaign out too much will result in long periods travelling between them, without advancing the storyline or mission. It is recommended that the four be used as a block unless there is very good reason not to.

The core worlds of the Tenipal Alliance are located in this region. They lie quite close to one another, within a small cluster forming part of a jump-1 main. The presence of an intelligent race may prompt the mission's space science staff to name the main or subsector (or both) after the Tenipal once they are detected. Tenipal ships are capable only of one-parsec jumps and will in general be encountered only on the central main. Exploration ships carrying additional fuel may range further afield.

NSY-S BETA 0106

The 0106 system is highly unusual. Its mainworld is a habitable planet orbiting at the leading Trojan point of a small gas giant. Its name translates as 'Lucky-Find' in the language of the Tenipal, who have established a small outpost there with the intent of gradually expanding it into a major colony.

Most other significant bodies in the system are gas giants, although the sixth orbit is occupied by a terrestrial planet that failed to form properly. This may originally have been the core of the third planet, a gas giant of very low density that may also be unstable. Not all gas giants have rocky cores but the others in this system do.

There is additional evidence of some highly unusual event in the system's early history. The outer planetoid belt is sparse and clumpy, suggesting a nearly-formed planet that disintegrated long ago. The next orbit in is occupied by what would be a more typical belt if it did not have a retrograde orbit. The most likely explanation is a cataclysmic event early in the development of the star system that influenced the formation of some planets and prevented that of others.

BETA 0106 (K4 Star)

Beta 0106 1 (X10000-O)
Beta 0106 2 (Small Gas Giant)
Beta 0106 3 (Low-Density Gas Giant)
Beta 0106 4 (Small Gas Giant)
Beta 0106 5/Lucky-Find (Trojan Planet: E765396-9)
Beta 0106 6 (Unstable Terrestrial)
Beta 0106 7 (Small Gas Giant)
Beta 0106 8 (X000000-O)
Beta 0106 9 (X000000-O)

NSY-S BETA 0109

The Beta 0109 system consists entirely of brown dwarfs and gas giants. The system's 'primary' is a complex arrangement of two near-identical brown dwarfs orbiting very close to one another, with a third as a close companion. Another binary pair and two single brown dwarfs orbit as distant companions. There are also six gas giants including two superjovians, one of which is gradually spiralling inward. It is not clear whether it will enter a close orbit around the central cluster or be drawn into a collision.

NSY-S BETA 0205

The Beta 0205 system is notable mainly for containing multiple unusable worlds. The first planet is a pressurised steam bath wracked by incredible storms, whilst the second and third are both buried under deep layers of water ice. The outermost terrestrial planet actually has liquid on its surface but it is not water. A deadly mix of corrosive chemicals keeps the fluid from freezing completely and might be a useful source of exotic compounds. Not surprisingly perhaps, the Tenipal Alliance does not maintain a presence in this system. A more inquisitive species might send research ships or build an outpost but the Tenipal already know enough about this system for their purposes. It is useless to them so they have no further interest.

BETA 0205 (K4 Star)

Beta 0205 1 (Large Gas Giant)
Beta 0205 2 (X7AD000-O)
Beta 0205 3 (X425000-O)
Beta 0205 4 (X105000-O)
Beta 0205 5 (Large Gas Giant)
Beta 0205 6 (XAB7000-O)
Beta 0205 7 (X000000-O)

NSY-S Beta

HEX	SYSTEM TYPE	STARS
0101	Solo	K4
0104	Binary	F9 with K3 close companion
0106	Solo	M8
0109	Multiple	Multiple brown dwarf system
0202	Solo	M2
0203	Solo	M9
0205	Solo	F2
0206	Multiple	Multiple star system
0207	Multiple	Multiple star system
0209	Solo	K5
0301	Solo	M1
0306	Binary	K5 with G8 distant companion
0307	Binary	K5 with K7 distant companion
0308	Solo	M8
0310	Solo	K7
0402	Binary	K4 with K7 close companion
0405	Binary	K0 with G2 close companion
0501	Solo	M5
0506	Binary	M4 with M3 close companion
0508	Binary	K7 with K5 close companion
0509	Binary	M4 with brown dwarf distant companion
0510	Solo	M3
0601	Solo	G6
0602	Solo	K3
0606	Binary	K4 with M4 distant companion
0608	Binary	G5 with G3 distant companion
0701	Binary	K3 with M1 distant companion
0703	Multiple	Multiple star system
0704	Solo	K6
0705	Solo	M5
0706	Binary	K7 with M4 distant companion
0709	Trinary	M4 with M2 close companion and M1 distant companion
0710	Binary	F9 with M9 distant companion
0804	Binary	M2 with M2 close companion
0805	Binary	G1 with K2 distant companion
0806	Solo	K4
0807	Binary	M2 with M9 distant companion
0809	Binary	K3 with K1 distant companion

NSY-S BETA 0206

The Beta 0206 system centres on a K6 (orange) main sequence star with a brown dwarf close companion. This pairing is orbited by an M6 (red) main sequence star and a binary pair of brown dwarfs, with an additional M5 (red) main sequence star in a very distant orbit.

Most planetary bodies in the system are rockballs, or otherwise uninhabitable, but the tertiary system not only has a gas giant and planetoid belt but also boasts a more or less habitable world. This was colonised almost as soon as it was discovered and today has a healthy industrial base. In-system mining vessels exploit the cold outer planetoid belt but the Tenipal rarely venture into the rest of the complex system; there is simply nothing there that interests them.

The colony on Tertiary 3 is named after the planet, translating literally as 'gritty air', a reference to the atmospheric taint. This is not serious in the short term as it takes the form of non-toxic but mildly abrasive dust particles. Filter masks clog quickly but it is generally safe to remove the mask and simply scrape or shake the filters clear of the worst of the dust.

NSY-S BETA 0206 PRIMARY (K6 star)

NSY-S BETA 0206 PRIMARY COMPANION (Brown Dwarf)

Primary 1 (X000000-0)

NSY-S BETA 0206 SECONDARY (M6 Star)

Secondary 1 (X000000-0)

Secondary 2 (X200000-0)

Secondary 3 (X110000-0)

NSY-S BETA 0206 MINOR-A (Brown Dwarf)

NSY-S BETA 0206 MINOR-B (Brown Dwarf)

Minor 1 (X622000-0)

NSY-S BETA 0206 TERTIARY (M5 Star)

Tertiary 1 (X7A9000-0)

Tertiary 2 (X420000-0)

Tertiary 3/Gritty Air (C677796-9)

Tertiary 4 (Small Gas Giant)

Tertiary 5 (X6A7000-0)

Tertiary 6 (X532000-0)

Tertiary 7 (X000000-0)

NSY-S BETA 0207

The Beta 0207 system consists of two trinary groupings of near-identical stars, orbiting as separate but related systems about a common barycentre. The first trinary group consists of an M5 (red) main sequence star with a pair of M9 stars as its distant companion, making the primary component of the system. The secondary component centres on a trinary grouping of two M8 (red) main sequence stars with

a third M8 as a distant companion. The primary and secondary groupings are orbited at a great distance by another M8 and two brown dwarfs.

The three tertiary stellar bodies do not have any planets, as such, but the two brown dwarfs possess a collection of small moons. Tertiary A has a thin scattering of planetoids orbiting it, too sparse to be a belt. This is probably the remnants of a planet that failed to form.

The primary system has only a single unappealing planet orbiting the central star but the M9 binary pair boasts a habitable world settled by the Tenipal. Known in the Tenipal language as Centre-of-Complexity, this was one of the first Tenipal colonies and has the largest population outside the homeworld. Unusually – in more ways than one – Centre-of-Complexity maintains a secondary colony on the world of Primary A 1. This colony is known as Proving-Ground to its inhabitants and was originally used to develop techniques for operating on less habitable worlds than the Tenipal prefer. Today it is primarily a training facility for explorers and starship crews, with a small permanent population.

The secondary system has a collection of gas giants orbiting the central pair of stars, with a few rockballs and a habitable planet orbiting the distant companion. This is known as Far-And-Separate in the Tenipal tongue and is an entirely independent state within the Alliance. The two main colonies in the 0207 system have close economic relations but do not always agree on matters of policy. In-system trade vessels ply between the two ports, sometimes spending a few weeks in holding orbit or sitting on a landing pad whilst some diplomatic issue is wrangled out.

NSY-S BETA 0207 PRIMARY A (M5 star)

Primary A 1 (C532396-9)

NSY-S BETA 0207 PRIMARY B (M9 star)

NSY-S BETA 0207 PRIMARY C (M9 star)

Primary BC 1 (X9B8000-0)

Primary BC 2/Centre-of-Complexity (C67896-9)

NSY-S BETA 0207 SECONDARY A (M8 star)

NSY-S BETA 0207 SECONDARY B (M8 star)

Secondary AB 1 (Small Gas Giant)

Secondary AB 2 (Small Gas Giant)

Secondary AB 3 (Large Gas Giant)

NSY-S BETA 0207 SECONDARY C (M8 star)

Secondary C 1 (D889696-9)

Secondary C 2/Far-And-Separate (X53A000-0)

Secondary C 3 (X3A1000-0)

Secondary C 4 (X8D1000-0)

NSY-S BETA 0207 TERTIARY A (M8 star)

NSY-S BETA 0207 TERTIARY B (Brown Dwarf)

NSY-S BETA 0207 TERTIARY C (Brown Dwarf)



NSY-S BETA 0306

The Beta 0306 system is important, primarily for its proximity to the Tenipal core worlds. It has no habitable planets but there is a small spaceport on one of the planetoids of the Primary 6 belt. Known as Place-of-Industry, this port serves mining ships that operate in the sixth and seventh-orbit planetoid belts. Despite its name, Place-of-Industry has only a very small industrial base. This is entirely geared to supporting mining ships and ore processing machinery; ingots of ore and blocks of other minerals are shipped to the other Tenipal worlds.

NSY-S BETA 0306 PRIMARY (G5 Star)

- Primary 1 (XAAA000-0)
- Primary 2 (Large Gas Giant)
- Primary 3 (Large Gas Giant)
- Primary 4 (Large Gas Giant)
- Primary 5 (X100000-0)
- Primary 6/Place-of-Industry (D000496-9)
- Primary 7 (X000000-0)

NSY-S BETA 0306 SECONDARY (G8 Star)

NSY-S BETA 0307

Beta 0307 is the Tenipal home system. It is a slightly unusual binary, in that both stars have planetary systems. The secondary system is of little value for settlement but its planetoids have been exploited for minerals since the early years of Tenipal space exploration. Mining-Port, as the settlement is called, has

an odd sort-of-autonomous status as a political entity in its own right but usually goes along with the general policies of the homeworld.

Home-of-Tenipal is the place of origin for the Tenipal species. Humans would consider its atmosphere tainted but the taint is composed of pollen from plants the Tenipal evolved alongside; whilst humans need a filter mask or a complex series of tailored inoculations, Tenipal do not. They are not reliant on this pollen but do like to cultivate plants from their homeworld as the scent is comforting.

The primary system was colonised in the early days of space exploration, at a time when interstellar travel was not possible. Once it became feasible to reach other star systems the Tenipal lost interest in colonising marginal and rockball worlds but in the home system colonies already established, expanded into member states of the Alliance in their own right.

The starport at Home-of-Tenipal would rate only Class C by the standards of Charted Space, but it is extensive and has construction cradles for starships. These are more or less hand-built on a craftsman rather than industrial basis. At any given time there will be several ships and craft in various stages of completion and others being pulled apart, either for maintenance or cannibalisation for spares. Occasionally a half-constructed ship must be dismantled and rebuilt as requirements change. The construction yards look chaotic to an outsider but the master shipbuilders of the Tenipal know exactly what is going on at any given time.

Ice-Pond is an airless rockball, which was colonised because it was the only planet early ships could reach. Today it is a minor manufacturing centre, with a single city perched atop a huge pocket of frozen water close to the crustal surface. This underground ocean provides fuel and oxygen for the sealed environment, which was essential in the early years. More advanced recycling and life support equipment made such an abundant source of water unnecessary but the location still has advantages.

Not-Good was colonised for much the same reason as Ice-Pond; because it could be. The colony never grew large and unlike Ice-Pond remains a governed territory of the homeworld. Much was learned from the colonisation effort and a small research installation continues to try new techniques and technologies.

Ambitious-Place was the last colony created before interstellar flight opened up new and more habitable worlds. Investment was extensive and the colony rapidly grew to the point where it became the first independent state of the Alliance – the first of the Tenipal Worlds that was not the homeworld. Today it is a major manufacturing centre, receiving shipments of raw materials from Mining-Port to augment its own resources.

NSY-S BETA 0307 PRIMARY (K5 Star)

- Primary 1/Home-of-Tenipal (C677A96-9)
- Primary 2/Ice-Pond (D114596-9)
- Primary 3 (D000000-0)
- Primary 4/Not-Good (D311496-9)
- Primary 5 (Small Gas Giant)
- Primary 6/Ambitious-Place (C6A8796-9)
- Primary 7 (Small Gas Giant)
- Primary 8 (Small Gas Giant)
- Primary 9 (X6A1000-0)
- Primary 10 (X6A2000-0)
- Primary 11 (Small Gas Giant)
- Primary 12 (XAA1000-0)

NSY-S BETA 0307 SECONDARY (K7 Star)

- Secondary 1 (Large Gas Giant)
- Secondary 2/Mining-Port (C000596-9)
- Secondary 3 (Small Gas Giant)
- Secondary 4 (X310000-0)
- Secondary 5 (X700000-0)

NSY-S BETA 0308

The Beta 0308 system has a collection of rockballs and gas giants, plus two planetoid belts. The inner one is mined by ships from the colony at Heavy-Air whilst the outer one is generally ignored. The innermost orbit is occupied by a small gas giant, unremarkable but for the presence of a small planet at its trailing Trojan point.

The world known to the Tenipal as Heavy-Air was not a great prospect for colonisation but has steadily grown in importance since it was first settled. Today it is an equal part of the Tenipal Alliance with an impressive history of being the homeworld of the governor appointed to lead the Alliance as a whole. A governmental complex was built, separate from the planetary capital, to house one of these leaders and today it serves as the de facto capital of the Alliance even if the current governor is from a different world.

NSY-S BETA 0308 (M8 Star)

- Beta 0308 1 (X32A000-0) (Trojan planet)
- Beta 0308 2/Heavy-Air (C996796-9)
- Beta 0308 3 (Small Gas Giant)
- Beta 0308 4 (X210000-0)
- Beta 0308 5 (Large Gas Giant)
- Beta 0308 6 (X000000-0)
- Beta 0308 7 (Small Gas Giant)
- Beta 0308 8 (X61000000)
- Beta 0308 9 (X310000-0)
- Beta 0308 10 (X000000-0)
- Beta 0308 11 (Small Gas Giant)

NSY-S BETA 0405

The Beta 0405 system was initially something of an obstacle to early exploration and colonisation. With no gas giants and no habitable world, the solution was to build a staging post on the innermost planet. Although uncomfortably near to the system's close companion stars, the port named Support-For-Ships provides fuel and basic services to vessels headed trailingward whilst the rest of the system is largely ignored. Support-For-Ships is not an autonomous part of the Alliance but receives support from central funds and is administered from the capital.

NSY-S BETA 0405 A (K0 Star)

NSY-S BETA 0405 B (G2 Star)

- AB 1/Support-For-Ships (C311396-9)
- AB 2 (X100000-0)
- AB 3 (X000000-0)
- AB 4 (X221000-0)
- AB 5 (X300000-0)
- AB 6 (X100000-0)

NSY-S BETA 0703

The 0703 system centres upon a pair of K7 (orange) main sequence stars, with a second pair of red stars (M4 and M3) as a distant companion. The barycentre of this two-pair system is orbited by a white dwarf star, along with the only planetary body in the system, a small gas giant following a complex orbit that has allowed it to pick up a few comets to create a moon system.

NSY-S-GAMMA

NSY-S Gamma is assumed to lie directly to rimward of Alpha, although the Referee can of course insert other regions in between the two if this is desirable. The subsector is dominated by a large cluster of stars at the rimward end, which connects into Alpha by way of a long main. However, jump-1 transit on the main is made more difficult by the nature of some star systems.

This subsector was the original home of the Erline. There are several devastated worlds that used to be Erline colonies, plus surviving colonies that regressed and did not manage the long climb back to starflight. The nearest of the Sovereigndoms have sent the occasional mission into Gamma but exploration has thus far been restricted to the coreward end of the subsector and several ships have been lost. This is widely assumed to be due to the usual hazards of interstellar exploration, which is not entirely incorrect, but some ships were destroyed by Citadels they encountered. The Sovereigndoms have deemed Gamma too hazardous to spend much effort on at the present, since there are opportunities closer to home that entail less risk.

NSY-S GAMMA 0304

The Gamma 0304 system consists of a large brown dwarf, orbited by a handful of moons, with a smaller brown dwarf in a distant orbit. Brown dwarf systems of this nature are not uncommon but are often missed off star charts in well-travelled areas as they tend not to be of any real importance. It is rare to find a brown dwarf system with significant planetary-sized bodies, so this system is notable in that three of its moons are large enough to be considered planets of a sort. The innermost is sufficiently warm to develop life eventually, which may be what attracted a research ship from the Sovereigndoms. Their vessel was critically damaged by a meteoroid impact during its approach to the moon and, although some crewmembers reached the surface in life pods, this only delayed the inevitable. The ship itself plunged into the brown dwarf and was destroyed.

NSY-S GAMMA 0307

The Gamma 0307 system contains an unusual close pair of mismatched stars, a hot yellow-white F2 and a much cooler M0. These orbit one another as a distant

companion of the F8 primary. The system is sparse, containing only two small gas giants and a rockball. All have complex orbits and are subject to changing conditions depending on relative positions of the stars. The system was interesting enough to Erline space scientists that a small research outpost was set up on the rockball world. Its remains, long abandoned, might be found on an orbital survey.

NSY-S GAMMA 0309

Gamma 0309 was the original home system of the Erline. Their homeworld was the only true terrestrial planet in the system and originally was a lush Earth-like world with abundant life. It was pounded by asteroid bombardment several thousand years ago, initiating a nuclear winter that has only recently begun to dissipate. Today, the world is covered by icefields and shrouded in thick, dirty clouds containing dust and gases from the volcanic eruptions triggered by the bombardment. The world is not entirely dead; there are a few primitive organisms to be found in areas where conditions are less severe. The infestation that triggered the attack was successfully wiped out by the initial strikes and a long period in which there was nothing for the entity's spores to feed on.

The remainder of the system has three gas giants and a low-density rocky planet with a deep atmosphere of hydrogen and methane. This is probably a 'failed gas giant' whose development was stunted by a lack of materials. It is possible the formation process was interrupted by some event that also caused the creation of no less than four planetoid belts. Three of these are typical, occupying planetary orbits in the outer system. The innermost lies very close to the star and receives intense stellar radiation; sufficient to interfere with instruments. A well-protected starship could venture there but all hazards are magnified by reduced sensor range, heating and radiation hazards.

With so many planetoids to work with, it is small wonder the Erline chose to build a planetoid base when they envisaged the Citadel project. Since their downfall the original Citadel has built more, similar to it but smaller, and launched them to other systems. It sends resource gathering craft – some of which are

NSY-S Gamma

HEX	SYSTEM TYPE	STARS
0102	Solo	K1
0103	Solo	M9
0104	Binary	F2 with F6 close companion)
0106	Binary	M5 with Brown Dwarf close companion
0108	Solo	F9
0110	Solo	K7
0201	Binary	G9 with M7 distant companion
0202	Binary	M3 with M4 close companion
0205	Binary	K7 with M0 distant companion
0207	Solo	M2
0209	Binary	M4 with M5 close companion
0301	Solo	M2
0304	Binary	Brown Dwarf with Brown Dwarf distant companion
0307	Trinary	F8 with F9/M0 distant companion pair
0308	Trinary	K4 with K2 close companion and M5 distant companion
0309	Solo	K7
0310	Binary	M4 with F2 distant companion
0402	Binary	M7 with M7 distant companion
0403	Solo	M1
0404	Binary	M4 with M3 close companion
0407	Trinary	M6 with M8 close companion and M1 distant companion
0408	Solo	G4
0409	Solo	F4
0502	Binary	M5 with M5 close companion

NSY-S Gamma (continued)

HEX	SYSTEM TYPE	STARS
0503	Solo	M6
0505	Solo	G5
0506	Trinary	G2 with M5 close companion and G3 distant companion
0507	Multiple	Complex system
0508	Binary	K6 with M7 close companion
0509	Solo	M6
0601	Trinary	M3 pair with Drown Dwarf distant companion
0602	Trinary	K1 with K4 close companion and M3 distant companion
0607	Binary	G3 with M9 distant companion
0608	Binary	M1 with K9 distant companion
0609	Solo	M6
0701	Binary	M8 with M7 close companion
0704	Trinary	K5 with M7 close companion and Brown Dwarf distant companion
0707	Binary	M9 with M4 close companion
0708	Multiple	Complex System
0709	Binary	M7 with M9 close companion
0710	Solo	M3
0803	Solo	M4
0804	Solo	M2
0805	Trinary	M3 pair with Brown Dwarf distant companion
0807	Solo	F6
0808	Solo	G0
0809	Solo	G5



built on planetoid hulls – to the outer belts but makes its lair in the innermost where certain materials are easy to obtain and unlimited electrical power can be generated from stellar radiation.

NSY-S GAMMA 0309 PRIMARY (K7 Star)

- Primary 1 (X000000-0)
- Primary 2 Large Gas Giant
- Primary 3/Erline (X775000-0)
- Primary 4 (Small Gas Giant)
- Primary 5 (Large Gas Giant)
- Primary 6 (X000000-0)
- Primary 7 (Low-Density Terrestrial)
- Primary 8 (X00000-0)
- Primary 9 (X00000-0)

NSY-S GAMMA 0403

Gamma 0403 is the first natural obstacle to exploration encountered by vessels moving coreward from NSY-S Alpha. The 'system' contains nothing more than an M1 (red) main sequence star and three small terrestrial planets orbiting close to the primary. These have no water or atmosphere and whilst an advanced ship like *Deepnight Revelation* could eventually find an icy comet to refuel from, locally available sensors are not up to the task. It is possible to use tanker refuelling to move past the system but this increases the support overhead for exploration missions considerably.

NSY-S GAMMA 0407

The NSY-S Gamma 0407 system is characterised by multiple rockball worlds of no real value. The innermost terrestrial planet, whilst hot, was once entirely habitable and one of the Erline colonies destroyed by the Citadels. As a result, the atmosphere was filled with dust and debris for a great many years, plunging the world into a nuclear winter that became just short of an ice age. As the dust settled, rapid heating caused a violent climatic upheaval resulting in a twisted and tormented landscape. The planet remains more or less dead but could be made habitable once again by the introduction of suitable plant and animal species.

NSY-S GAMMA 0407 PRIMARY A (M6 Star)

NSY-S GAMMA 0407 PRIMARY B (M8 Star)

- AB 1 (Small Gas Giant)
- AB 2 (X644000-0)
- AB 3 (X10000-0)
- AB 4 (X31000-0)
- AB 5 (X51000-0)
- AB 6 (X20000-0)
- AB 7 (Small Gas Giant)

NSY-S GAMMA 0407 PRIMARY A (M1 Star)

NSY-S GAMMA 0505

Gamma 0505 is a lone star, with no planets or other large bodies. As with Gamma 0403, it would be possible to locate icy comets for fuel but this is beyond the capabilities of locally equipped ships.

NSY-S GAMMA 0507

NSY-S Gamma 0507 can be considered to be three star systems in close proximity, with an additional M8 in very distant orbit. The primary is orbited by a rockball and two small gas giants, in addition to a terrestrial world that would be habitable were it not so hot. The dense atmosphere of this world has allowed it to retain surface water but the environment is turbulent in the extreme. As a result, the ecosystem is dominated by extremely hardy creatures and predators evolved to feed on them. This world qualifies as a biological hell world; there is nothing particularly toxic or insidious about the ecosphere but plants will force their way into almost any structure sooner or later and animals are highly dangerous.

The secondary stellar grouping is orbited by two large gas giants and a water world, which receives a great deal of energy from its two stars. Primitive life is rampant in its world-ocean and beginning to put oxygen into the atmosphere. It will be millions of years before the planet is able to support advanced oxygen-breathing life but the early processes would be of great interest to the life sciences team aboard *Deepnight Revelation*.

The remainder of the system is characterised by rockball planets of no great value.

NSY-S GAMMA 0507 PRIMARY (K5 Star)

- Primary 1 (X886000-0)
- Primary 2 (Small Gas Giant)
- Primary 3 (X220000-0)
- Primary 4 (Small Gas Giant)

NSY-S GAMMA 0507 SECONDARY A (K5 Star)

NSY-S GAMMA 0507 SECONDARY B (K7 Star)

- Secondary AB 1 (Large Gas Giant)
- Secondary AB 2 (Large Gas Giant)
- Secondary AB 3 (X7AA000-0)

NSY-S GAMMA 0507 TERTIARY A (K9 Star)

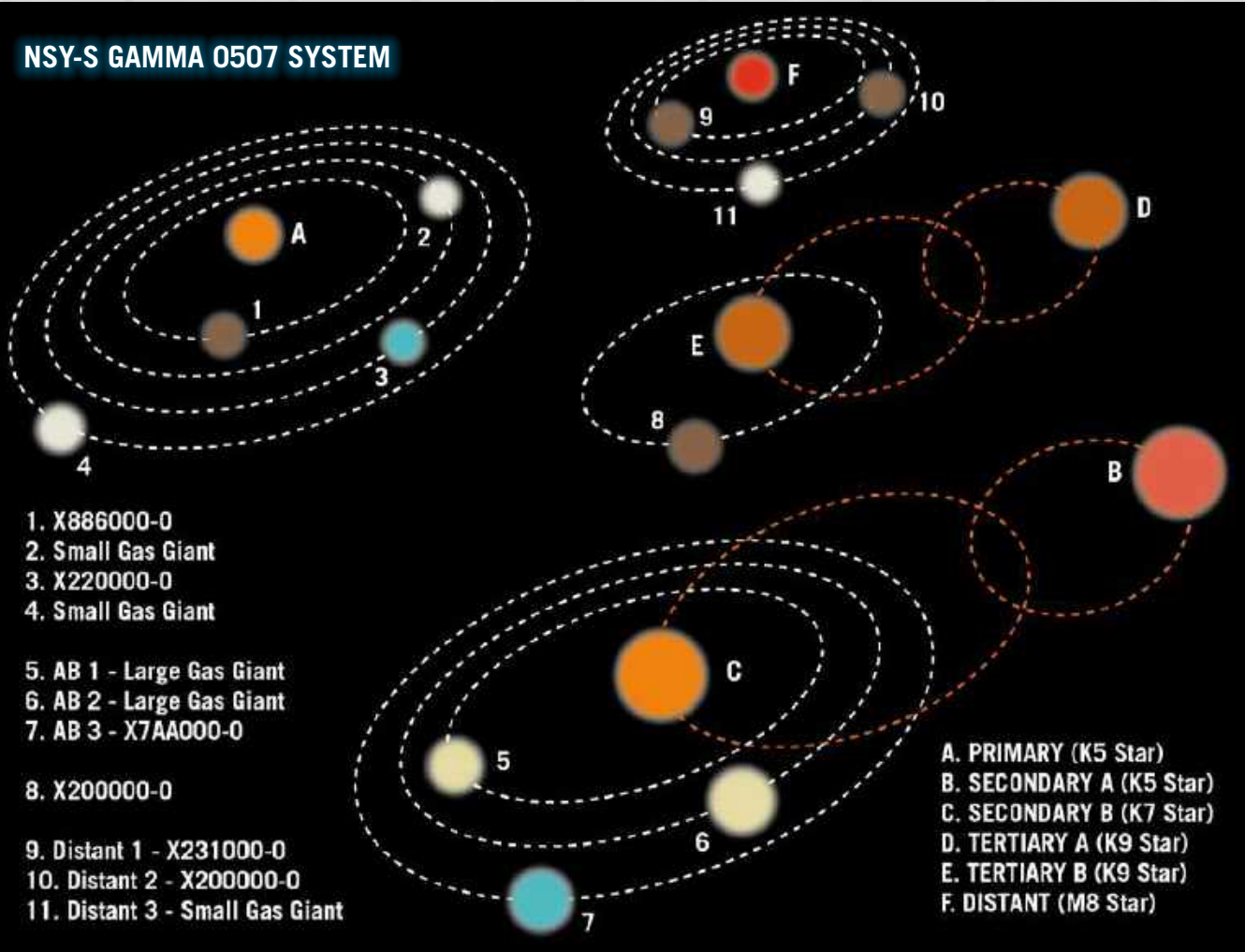
NSY-S GAMMA 0507 TERTIARY B (K9 Star)

- Tertiary 1 (X200000-0)

NSY-S GAMMA 0507 DISTANT (M8 Star)

- Distant 1 (X231000-0)
- Distant 2 (X200000-0)
- Distant 3 (Small Gas Giant)

NSY-S GAMMA 0507 SYSTEM



NSY-S GAMMA 0607

The Gamma 0607 system was once an Erline colony but became an early victim of the Citadels. The attack pattern was typical; the Citadel entered the system and made a flypast of the mainworld with the intention of targeting any space vessels or orbital installations, then moved to the planetoid belt and began bombardment with asteroids. Eventually it returned to the mainworld to finish its work with more precise attacks.

In this case, however, the Citadel was malfunctioning and made a number of serious errors. The initial flypast was successful and eliminating the handful of surviving starships at the mainworld was not difficult, however the asteroid bombardment was distinctly wayward due to poor trajectory calculations. Today, there are dozens of planetoids on semi-random trajectories that cannot possibly have occurred naturally. These are the asteroids that missed the mainworld entirely; some may fall into new orbits someday whilst others will be ejected from the system or collide with other bodies. This has happened in a few cases already.

Some asteroids did strike the mainworld, causing sufficient damage to wreck the colony and kill much of the population. The remainder scattered before the Citadel reached their world a second time and somehow managed to cling to a precarious existence until the debris from the bombardment no longer obscured the sun. The Citadel was on a badly calculated trajectory and could make only a close pass, doing as much damage as it could before beginning a long loop back towards its target.

It was 3,000 years before the Citadel entered orbit. By this time its programming was riddled with errors and maintenance omissions had led to widespread failures in its systems. Nevertheless, it managed to send down probes to search for signs of infestation. Finding none, it decided to impose a quarantine on the world with its remaining resources and continues to stand guard to this day. It is in very poor condition but will prevent any ships on or off the world, attacking without warning if its targeting parameters are met.

The colonists planetside fell back to barbarism but have managed to claw their way back up to a basic level of technology. Memories of the migration to the colony world and subsequent destruction of their new home are vague, the subject of folk tales and legends, but the Erline of this planet are aware it is not their ancestral home. They have no idea what befell any other worlds but surmise that some cataclysm destroyed their parent civilisation. They believe they have been left by some cosmic force in a 'land of trials' to make what existence they can and that, perhaps, if they prosper they will be given or discover the lost secrets of their race.

This pseudo-religion has many variants, causing deep divisions in local society. Some groups are fully religious or mystical in their viewpoint whilst others take a more pragmatic approach. All agree that their people were judged – whether by gods or an uncaring chain of cause-and-effect – and found wanting. All are aware of the Citadel that lurks in orbit. Whether it is an inimical god or something else, it hangs over everything the Erline do on their new homeworld, with the result that those who do not actively try to propitiate it have a fatalistic attitude. It is not possible for them to know whether the Citadel will make another attack and there is nothing they can do about it anyway. Local society tends to be rather gloomy as a result.

NSY-S GAMMA 0607 PRIMARY (G3 Star)

Primary 1	(X621000-0)
Primary 2	(Small Gas Giant)
Primary 3	(Small Gas Giant)
Primary 4/Erhal	(X777671-2)
Primary 5	(X000000-0)
Primary 6	(Large Gas Giant)

NSY-S GAMMA 0607 SECONDARY (M9 Star)

Secondary 1	(X311000-0)
Secondary 2	(X831000-0)

NSY-S GAMMA 0708

Gamma 0708 is highly complex. Its primary is a bright A2 main sequence star orbited by a large gas giant; there are no other planetary bodies. A secondary cluster

consisting of an identical close pair or M4 (red) main sequence stars plus two additional stars describes an eccentric orbit around the system's barycentre, counterbalanced by a system of two red main sequence stars orbiting one another and moving around the system as a pair. Another near-identical binary pair of red stars occupies a distant orbit, whilst a G2 star meanders around the whole system in an orbit that may or may not be stable.

NSY-S GAMMA 0708 PRIMARY (A2 Star)

Primary 1 (Large Gas Giant)

NSY-S GAMMA 0708 SECONDARY A1 (M4 Star)

NSY-S GAMMA 0708 SECONDARY A2 (M4 Star)

NSY-S GAMMA 0708 SECONDARY B (G7 Star)

NSY-S GAMMA 0708 SECONDARY C (M9 Star)

NSY-S GAMMA 0708 TERTIARY A (M3 Star)

NSY-S GAMMA 0708 TERTIARY B (M4 Star)

NSY-S GAMMA 0708 DISTANT 1A (M8 Star)

NSY-S GAMMA 0708 DISTANT 1B (M9 Star)

NSY-S GAMMA 0708 DISTANT 2 (G2 Star)

NSY-S GAMMA 0710

The Gamma 0710 system contains the only significant outpost created by the Erline Worlds in the subsector. It is a small colony, set up to support exploration into the region and although it is theoretically one of the Erline Worlds, it is generally regarded as a service installation rather than a state in its own right. At any given time there will be a handful of ships at most, including transports and freighters, plus an exploration vessel or two. Any Erline vessels in the rimward end of the subsector will be staging out of the colony at Ctskath.

NSY-S GAMMA 0703 PRIMARY (M3 Star)

Primary 1	(Small Gas Giant)
Primary 2	(Large Gas Giant)
Primary 3	(Small Gas Giant)
Primary 4/Ctskath	(D555343-A)
Primary 5	(Small Gas Giant)
Primary 6	(X621000-0)

NSY-S-DELTA

NSY-S Delta exhibits much lower stellar density to neighbouring Gamma. It is characterised by small mains and clusters, with isolated systems forming strategic jump-2 links between them. This region was settled by the Erline shortly before the fall of their original civilisation. No colonies were attacked by the Citadels but without offworld support the small communities struggled and some failed. A measure of mutual assistance was possible in the early years but once the few available starships began to malfunction the colonies were left to their own devices.

Once one of the former colonies regained starflight, the Erline were able to search for their kin. Some colonies had vanished without trace, covered by centuries of vegetation and soil deposition but others still existed in a regressed state. The process of assisting these regressed worlds was not without difficulties; some refused all offers of help or turned hostile. Eventually, the handful of worlds able to cooperate grew into the modern Erline Worlds. Exploration has increased in scope since the discovery of the 2-parsec jump drive, allowing contact with the Sovereigndoms and the Tenipal Alliance. Both have brought new problems, leading to a move towards consolidation before further expansion can be considered.

NSY-S DELTA 0202

The Delta 0202 system is extremely sparse, containing only a single terrestrial planet of its own and a transient world. The latter entered the system over a million years ago, will not fully exit for millions more and is subject to a changing heating/cooling cycle as it spirals in and out again. It was thus of interest to the Erline despite being a frozen wasteland with an unbreathable atmosphere. The only habitation is a small settlement built to support a research installation.

The mainworld, known as Zrenh in the Erline language, is far more significant. Although less than perfect it was able to support the population of a collapsed colony after the fall of the original Erline civilisation. Although the population grew, the colony never got further than TL4 before it was re-contacted by more successful Erline enclaves. Uplift was offered, and graciously accepted, and Zrenh re-emerged as a starfaring power in just a few hundred years. Initially, the world was reliant

on supplied technology but a vigorous drive to become self-sufficient has propelled it to the forefront of the Erline Worlds. Ships from Zrenh can be encountered in any subsector of the region and exploration vessels are particularly interested in finding other remnant cultures.

NSY-S DELTA 0202 PRIMARY (K5 Star)

Primary 1/Zrenh (C659845-A)

Primary 2 (E9A1345-A)

NSY-S DELTA 0205

Delta 0205 orbits a pair of red main sequence stars, which produce enough energy to permit near-habitable conditions on the mainworld. Czath, as it is known locally, is cold and dim, with forests of cactus-like thick-skinned plants covering most of the useable surface. It is not an inviting world but an important one. Czath has a low population for a major industrial centre but has the highest robotics-to-citizens ratio in the Erline Worlds – which is saying something.

The system's four planetoid belts are all exploited for minerals, which are concentrated at a small spaceport/processing centre before being shipped to the robotic factories of the mainworld. The outposts have little industry of their own and are reliant on the mainworld for support. They are subject to direct control, so only Czath itself is one of the Erline Worlds; the rest are possessions in the same manner that a citizen's robots are not counted among the population. The outposts are not much better regarded than robotic conveniences; the citizens who work there consider the mainworld their home and have no loyalty to a chunk of rock where they earn a salary for a few years.

NSY-S DELTA 0205 PRIMARY A (M1 Star)

NSY-S DELTA 0205 PRIMARY B (M3 Star)

AB 1	(E000445-A)
AB 2	(Small Gas Giant)
AB 3	(D000545-A)
AB 4	(X3A1000-O)
AB 5/Czath	(C554645-A)
AB 6	(Small Gas Giant)
AB 7	(Small Gas Giant)
AB 8	(Small Gas Giant)
AB 9	(E000245-A)
AB 10	(E000245-A)

NSY-S Delta

HEX	SYSTEM TYPE	STARS
0106	Solo	M5
0201	Binary	G4 with G5 close companion
0202	Solo	K5
0203	Binary	K2 with M8 distant companion
0205	Binary	M1 with M3 close companion
0206	Trinary	K7 with K2 close companion and K3 distant companion
0209	Binary	K7 with M5 close companion
0210	Solo	K4
0302	Solo	F9
0306	Binary	K2 with M6 close companion
0308	Trinary	K7 with M7 close companion and G6 distant companion
0310	Binary	K5 with Brown Dwarf close companion
0407	Solo	M0
0502	Trinary	G1 with M6 close companion and Brown Dwarf distant companion
0506	Binary	K1 with M7 close companion
0602	Binary	K0 with M1 close companion
0603	Solo	M5
0604	Solo	M5
0704	Solo	M5
0707	Multiple	Complex System
0708	Solo	F6
0709	Trinary	K4 with M4 close companion and K3 distant companion
0710	Solo	K8
0801	Binary	M3 pair
0802	Solo	K5
0803	Binary	M1 with M4 close companion
0804	Binary	K2 with K8 distant companion
0807	Solo	M6
0810	Trinary	M2 with M7 pair as distant companion

NSY-S DELTA 0407

The Delta 0407 system contains the 'oldest' of the Erline Worlds, in the sense that the colony on Zahline was the first to regain the ability to construct starships and assisted others in doing the same. Today, it is the cultural heart of the Erline Worlds and hosts the administration complex for all over-arching functions alongside its own world capital. The headquarters for the Erline military, such as it is, occupies an installation close to the capital within a secured zone, which also could act as a refuge for the government in the event of

an attack. This is not deemed at all likely but reports of what happened to the original homeworld were retained – albeit in highly distorted form – and the need to preserve governmental functions in a crisis was never entirely forgotten.

Apart from a small mining outpost in the inner planetoid belt, Zahline has few offworld possessions but operates the most extensive trade fleet in the Erline Worlds. A presence is also maintained in the strategically important Delta 0506 system.

NSY-S DELTA 0407 PRIMARY (M0 Star)

Primary 1 (Small Gas Giant)
Primary 2/Zahline (C666835-A)
Primary 3 (E000335-A)
Primary 4 (Large Gas Giant)
Primary 5 (X000000-0)
Primary 6 (Large Gas Giant)
Primary 7 (X110000-0)

NSY-S DELTA 0506

The Delta 0506 system is strategically important to the Erline Worlds as it provides jump-2 access to the entire subsector and, by way of connecting mains, other more distant regions. It is not claimed as such but there is a semi-permanent refuelling station at the inner gas giant, which supports de facto ownership of the system by Zahline. The station consists of a framework to which modules are attached; some of these are components of the station itself, others are fuel-skimming shuttles which act as tanks when not refilling.

Fuel is provided at no cost to any Erline ships passing through, in return for gifts and general goodwill. This arrangement would be extended to any non-hostile ships passing through, although the station operators expect crews to acknowledge their 'ownership' of the system in return.

NSY-S DELTA 0506 PRIMARY A (K1 Star)

NSY-S DELTA 0506 PRIMARY B (M7 Star)

AB 1 (X8B8000-0)
AB 2 (X000000-0)
AB 3 (Large Gas Giant)
AB 4 (Small Gas Giant)
AB 5 (X310000-0)

NSY-S DELTA 0603

The Delta 0603 system contains a regressed Erline colony whose inhabitants have resisted all attempts to establish peaceful relations. Old records have produced a name for the world (Klatkl) but explorers from the Erline Worlds have met with blatant, and at times extreme, hostility from the local population. Society is fragmented into confederations of tribes, which war on one another for territory, resources and overall dominance. It is likely that non-Erline visitors would be just as unwelcome.

NSY-S DELTA 0603 PRIMARY (M5 Star)

Primary 1 (X44000-0)
Primary 2/Klatkl (X864873-1)
Primary 3 (Large Gas Giant)
Primary 4 (X521000-0)

NSY-S DELTA 0707

The Delta 0707 system is complex. The primary is a K9 (orange) star at the upper mass limit for the main sequence, which has a similar but slightly less massive K9 as its distant companion. A pair of near-identical M4 (red) main sequence stars, with another M4 as a distant companion, make up the secondary part of the system, with a solo M5 as a tertiary stellar body. A brown dwarf follows a complex path through the whole stellar maze, accompanied by the only terrestrial bodies in the system. These are half a dozen moons, one of them large enough to be considered a dwarf planet. The other stellar groupings have only a scattering of planetoids, not quite dense enough to be considered a belt in the usual sense.

NSY-S DELTA 0710

Delta 0710 is sparse, with two terrestrial bodies and a gas giant. It does contain a more or less habitable planet, which is home to a partial member of the Erline Worlds. The regressed colony of Kskatk managed to climb back up to a mid-Tech Level before being contacted by the starfaring Erline. The world is heavily balkanised, and not all states are friendly towards their more advanced cousins, but there is a small diplomatic mission from the Erline Worlds on-planet and trade ships visit from time-to-time. The process of winning over and eventually unifying the states of Ktsatk is a slow one but likely to succeed given time. In the interim, the Erline Worlds trade with the regressed colony states on terms designed to give them what they need to advance without offending their dignity. The process is carefully calculated and interference by other starfarers, however well-meaning, is unlikely to be appreciated.

NSY-S DELTA 0710 PRIMARY (K8 Star)

Primary 1/Kskatk (E746775-5)
Primary 2 (Small Gas Giant)
Primary 3 (X521000-0)



**A DAY IN THE LIFE
OF THE CREW**



CROSSING POINT

A potentially suitable crossing point is located on the rimward side of the Last Prospect sector. The stellar data presented here is assumed, as usual, to lie in a subsector-sized area, which may or may not correspond to a map subsector depending on the Referee's needs. The area has been arbitrarily named the Last Prospect; Best Hope subsector – LPBH for short. The Travellers may decide to assign their own name or simply pass through these systems on their way across the Great Rift. As always, the data presented here may require tweaks to fit the campaign as it develops. What follows is a baseline for the Referee's creativity.

Ideally, the Travellers will be able to find a crossing point and continue the campaign as envisaged by the designers. If that can be achieved by moving a few things around on a map of an area unlikely to be revisited, this is a small price to pay. Alternatively, the Referee can assume that what is presented here is absolute, rigid and unchangeable, in which case the Travellers may have to be railroaded to this point or allowed to give up on the search for a crossing point and start the long transit around the outside of the Great Rift.

The best solution is to have this crossing available if the Travellers are willing to do the work to find it and solve the problem of how to cross the initial gap. Clues and solutions are available in this adventure and the Travellers can always be given a nudge in the right direction by their Mission Division staff. A balance is thus struck between the Travellers having complete agency to do as they please and a desire to keep the campaign more or less on track. What the Referee should not do is be held hostage by Traveller wilfulness; if they refuse to help the locals or look for a crossing point, the Referee should not give in and simply hand them a solution. The Travellers are embarked upon a great endeavour and should have to work to solve the problems they encounter but at the same time the Referee should always ensure a solution is available if the Travellers look hard enough.

LAST PROSPECT; BEST HOPE

LPBH contains five star systems. Three are close to the 'shore' of the Great Rift and can be reached from NSY-S Gamma. The other two lie far out in the rift and will

require deep space refuelling. Beyond these systems a chain of good prospects for refuelling stretches across the Great Rift. A jump-4 starship could make this crossing if the initial gap could be bridged. Initial scans do not indicate any suitable refuelling points, such as comets or rogue gas giants, positioned to act as a bridge. The chain of prospective refuelling points runs beyond this subsector, all the way across the rift, but it is beyond the scope of this adventure since the climax involves finding a way onto the chain – actually crossing the rift will be a new adventure.

LPBH 0101

The LPBH 0101 system at first seems like a good prospect for colonisation by the races that live in the region but its innermost planet is far too hot for comfort. Nevertheless, it has developed a varied ecosystem in its steamy, low-lying swamplands. Abundant food and biological products could be obtained here and with adequate technological support humans or similar creatures could operate or live on-planet for an extended period. However, without such assistance even quite simple tasks, such as a survey or collection of biological matter, would be hazardous.

LPBH 0101 SECONDARY (M8 Star)

Primary 1 (X2A0000-O)

LPBH 0101 PRIMARY (M9 Star)

- Secondary 1 (X654000-O)
- Secondary 2 (Small Gas Giant)
- Secondary 3 (X000000-O)
- Secondary 4 (Small Gas Giant)
- Secondary 5 (X111000-O)
- Secondary 6 (Small Gas Giant)
- Secondary 7 (X330000-O)
- Secondary 8 (X5A1000-O)
- Secondary 9 (Small Gas Giant)
- Secondary 10 (Small Gas Giant)
- Secondary 11 (X8D2000-O)
- Secondary 12 (X5A1000-O)
- Secondary 13 (Large Gas Giant)

LPBH 0302

LPBH 0302 is a likely jumping-off point for the crossing of the Great Rift. It is very suitable, since it not only has gas giants for fuel but also two semi-habitable planets for use as a base. Neither is perfect but both have

Last Prospect; Best Hope

HEX	SYSTEM TYPE	STARS
0101	Binary	M9 with M8 distant companion
0302	Solo	M4
0401	Trinary	K8 with M6 close companion and M4 distant companion
0407	Solo	M6
0609	Solo	M6

advantages. The innermost has a very thin atmosphere of unbreathable gases. Although it cannot provide a 'shirtsleeve' environment this does make landing and take-off operations easy and creates a short interface distance between the surface and a ship in orbit. The outer terrestrial is a better option, with a thin and tainted, but breathable atmosphere, and some life. It is located on the outer edge of the warm zone, however, and is cold and gloomy. Personnel can operate outside in a parka and filter mask, which provides relief from the shipboard environment, even if not ideal, and full vacuum-world protocols are not needed for a temporary settlement.

LPBH 0302 PRIMARY (M4 Star)

- Primary 1 (Small Gas Giant)
- Primary 2 (X323000-0)
- Primary 3 (Small Gas Giant)
- Primary 4 (X843000-0)

LPBH 0401

LPBH 0401 is a highly unusual star system, in that the secondary planetary system orbiting the distant companion star contains far more useful bodies. The primary system consists of three distinct planetoid belts and little else, whilst the companion system is a mix of uninhabitable terrestrial planets and gas giants. It is not an ideal prospect for a jumping-off point for the rift crossing but does contain most of the resources that would be required.

LPBH 0401 PRIMARY A (K8 Star)

LPBH 0401 PRIMARY B (M6 Star)

- AB 1 (X000000-0)
- AB 2 (X000000-0)
- AB 3 (X000000-0)

LPBH 0401 SECONDARY (M4 Star)

- Secondary 1 (X110000-0)
- Secondary 2 (Large Gas Giant)
- Secondary 3 (Large Gas Giant)
- Secondary 4 (Large Gas Giant)
- Secondary 5 (X300000-0)
- Secondary 6 (X520000-0)
- Secondary 7 (X6A1000-0)

LPBH 0407

The LPBH 0407 system contains two gas giants, which can be detected at a distance by a suitably diligent scan. Among its rockball worlds are two covered in thick ice. The innermost has an eccentric orbit that keeps it outside the warm zone for millennia at a time, occasionally passing close enough to melt some of the surface ice. This creates a curiously perfect sphere of ice. The second ice planet is permanently frozen other than around a few volcanic vents.

LPBH 0407 PRIMARY (M6 Star)

- Primary 1 (X44A000-0)
- Primary 2 (Small Gas Giant)
- Primary 3 (X69A000-0)
- Primary 4 (X000000-0)
- Primary 5 (X400000-0)
- Primary 6 (X620000-0)
- Primary 7 (Large Gas Giant)

LPBH 0609

The LPBH 0609 system contains a planetoid belt orbiting very close to the star, which is occasionally perturbed by the gas giant's eccentric orbit. The usual result is to rearrange the belt but occasionally a planetoid is flung out. These are often caught by the gas giant, creating a large and chaotic moon system. Refuelling is a little hazardous as a result. An alternative might be to obtain ice from the fourth planet, which has small icefields kept from evaporating by the very thin atmosphere of carbon dioxide and nitrogen.

LPBH 0609 PRIMARY (M6 Star)

- Primary 1 (X000000-0)
- Primary 2 (Large Gas Giant)
- Primary 3 (X100000-0)
- Primary 4 (X431000-0)
- Primary 5 (X530000-0)

EXPLORING THE NEAR SIDE OF YONDER

The Near Side of Yonder consists of several sectors. Four subsectors are presented in this book, as they are necessary to the adventure storyline, but the Travellers are free to wander around as much as they please. The *Campaign Guide* and *The Riftsedge Transit* should be used as a guide to how systems outside the region detailed in this book can be fleshed out and adventures created. This will only be necessary if the Travellers are inclined to meander around the region; those who focus on getting to the most likely prospect for a crossing point may dash from one refuelling point to the next without much exploration. Even so, the occasional side trip or stopover is likely.

When covering the great distances required by the *Deepnight Revelation* expedition, it is possible that the Travellers may encounter old radio-frequency signals, which could lead them to an emerging civilisation. Signals propagate at the speed of light, so one picked up at a distance of 10 parsecs (roughly 33 light-years) will have originated over 30 years ago. Signals also become fainter at great distances, eventually being lost in the general radio-frequency noise of the galaxy. The emissions of the original Erline civilisation are now around 12,000 light-years from their origin point, and long ago became too faint to detect, but signals produced by the modern starfaring societies in the

RADIO-FREQUENCY ARCHAEOLOGY

The technique of radio-emission archaeology has been successfully used on many occasions to learn about a vanished civilisation. It is a tricky business, requiring a starship to position itself where radio-frequency emissions can be picked up, with emissions from varying distances corresponding to periods in the culture's history. Occasionally a broadcast can be fully decoded but more commonly all archaeologists have to work with is the amount of emissions and their nature.

A mass of unintelligible signals can still give a picture of the situation, indicating when certain technologies (such as radio transmission or maser communications) came into use. A sudden hiatus or cessation of emissions suggests disaster and can be used to date the fall of a culture. However, the waters are muddied by multiple emission points. A starfaring civilisation will produce similar signals at many different worlds, making it difficult to establish which came from where and, as a general rule, the more emissions a civilisation produces the less clear and useful data can be obtained.

Radio-frequency archaeology cannot be used to learn about the original Erline civilisation but emissions of the three modern cultures might be picked up at a distance. This will tell the Travellers there are technological civilisations in the region or were up until quite recently. It will be possible to establish a rough Tech Level estimate of 8-10 from the emissions and the fact that they differ considerably will suggest the presence of more than one civilisation. Smart Travellers may also figure out that there are multiple emission points and infer at least one civilisation in the region is capable of interstellar travel.

A determined effort, collecting emission data at multiple points as *Deepnight Revelation* moves through the region, will permit the Travellers to estimate the position of inhabited systems to within 1-3 parsecs at a distance of up to 25 parsecs and pinpoint the precise location within 10 parsecs. This is a Typical, Routine research project requiring 8 Research Points and a Routine (6+) skill check once the data is available. Emission data can be collected during routine operations such as refuelling or conducting planetary scans but will require *Deepnight Revelation* to spend D3 days in each of 1D systems before research can begin. The same raw data can be used for more than one research project but each location must be determined separately.

region can be picked up within 100 parsecs of the NSY-S region. At this distance they are faint and badly jumbled up but at least the Travellers will be forewarned of at least one technological society ahead.

THE NSY-S ADVENTURE

There are many ways the situation in the NSY-S region could play out. The Travellers might just shrug and fly past or might take it into their heads to exterminate all three cultures and loot the smoking ruins. However, it is likely they will become involved in the local struggles and ultimately benefit from good relations with at least one of the three cultures.

If the Travellers cannot think of any reason to get involved for themselves, their Mission Division staff may be able to point out potential benefits. These include (but are not limited to):

There are undiscovered civilisations ahead! What is the *Deepnight Revelation* expedition about if not studying new cultures? A countervailing argument could be offered that the mission is to get to Terminus Point and learn about the Deepnight Entity and distractions are not necessarily a good thing. However, the expedition's backers want information on the regions the mission passed through and telling them a starfaring civilisation was detected but ignored will not go down well. Besides, the Mission staff will be demoralised by a refusal to let them do what they came along to do.

These people know about the region. Friendly relations will make it possible to obtain data on all the worlds the local races have ever explored. True, second-hand information might not be as reliable or accurate as our own, however it is likely to require vastly less effort to obtain.

A friendly port would be a welcome chance to rest and make repairs. Local spaceports might be primitive by the standards of Charted Space but they are still far better than trying to make repairs in orbit around some rockball. A chance to get out of the ship in relatively civilised circumstances would also be a nice change for the crew and will improve morale.

There is a mystery here. It will become apparent sooner or later that this region has an unusual history. Friendly relations will make it much simpler to unravel the mysteries of the NSY-S subsectors. It may be that this does not affect the mission at all but some effort to find out about what is happening here might allow the Travellers to avoid a serious problem along the way.

The locals might be able to help with crossing the Great Rift. The local starfaring races are incapable of making the crossing themselves but may know potential refuelling points. They may even be able to offer practical assistance. Even if they cannot, the work of finding a crossing point and preparing for the endeavour will be easier if the Travellers do not have to fight their way across the region.

The Travellers' adventures in the NSY-S region have a distinct start and end point – when they arrive in the area and when they begin their crossing, or abandon the search for one and leave. Beyond this, it is not possible to predict with any certainty what they might do. However, it is likely they will explore, meet one of the local races and become drawn into the projected adventure storyline. The payoff for completing this adventure is assistance in making their crossing of the Great Rift.

The projected adventure storyline is, of necessity, rather loose. The Travellers may wander around for some time before beginning the next phase of the adventure, especially if they wish to search for resources or conduct a detailed survey of the area. However, the adventure has the following key elements:

Making Contact: The Travellers enter the region and explore, gradually becoming aware that there are sentient races in the area. Sooner or later they meet one of the local races. Contact with the others is more or less inevitable after this.

Investigation: The Travellers investigate an attack on one of the local worlds.

Gunboat Diplomacy: The Travellers attempt to prevent a war between two of the local factions.

Seeking the Citadels: The Travellers journey to the homeworld of the Erline and learn the truth.

Showdown: The Travellers lead local forces in defence against a Citadel.

RELATIONS WITH THE LOCALS

Relations with the local alien cultures must be tracked by the Referee. Friendly actions and helpful deeds will improve relations but even if the Travellers are not outrightly hostile they may be blamed for something that happens elsewhere or for allowing it to happen. Association with one faction might also reduce relations with another unfriendly to it.

Relations with each faction are tracked using an indicator, named the Faction Relations Indicator (FRI),

tracked separately, with levels of cooperation, friendship and potential hostility indicated by numeric values. Relations with the Tenipal are tracked by the Tenipal Relations Indicator, or TRI; for the Erline this is ERI and for the Sovereigns it is SRI.

Actions that positively or negatively affect any FRI are broadly the same but each faction has its own agenda so will be impressed or otherwise by different actions. It is possible for an FRI to exceed 15 in either direction. This indicates an even greater depth of feeling and makes it harder to move back to more neutral relations.

The DM listed on the Faction Relations table applies whenever the attitude of the faction is relevant, normally including Diplomacy and Persuade checks. Note that a faction will not change its allegiance on a single check but the DM+3 from Positive Relations, for example, might be applied to an attempt to gain an audience with the planetary ruler, which in turn might bring the Travellers one step closer towards forging a permanent alliance.

Faction Relations

Faction Relations Indicator	Description	DM
-15 or lower	Hatred	-6
-12 to -14	War	-4
-9 to -11	Active Hostility	-3
-6 to -7	Passive Hostility	-2
-3 to -5	Strained Relations	-1
-2 to 2	Neutral Relations	+0
3 to 5	Positive Relations	+1
6 to 8	Passive Assistance	+2
9 to 11	Active Assistance	+3
12 to 14	Friendship	+4
15 or more	Strong Friendship	+6

Hatred: The faction (not always openly) hates the Travellers and will actively plan to impede or destroy them. Near-fanatical attacks are possible and cooperation is virtually impossible under any circumstances.

War: The faction openly considers the Travellers to be enemies. Whether or not formal declarations have been made, the Travellers and their associates are considered fair game and will be attacked without warning if the situation seems advantageous.

Active Hostility: The faction is openly and directly opposed to the Travellers. Harassment is near-certain and opportunistic attacks are likely. These might be officially sanctioned operations or the actions of



independent groups that hate the Travellers... or they could be something in between. All factions will use deniable assets if they feel the risk is worth it but for the most part active hostility will involve posturing, insults and petty interference or impediment, rather than overt action.

Passive Hostility: The faction will work against the Travellers in a passive manner, for example by making legal challenges that are ostensibly brought 'without fear or favour' just because there is a possible transgression or dubious precedent being set. Merchants will charge extra and delay deliveries, or may be leaned on by the authorities to do so, officials may misplace paperwork or deal with other things first. Passive hostility may be accompanied by a high level of politeness and formality, endless excuses and the like. Depending on the faction's agenda, this may be presented as sincere or the faction may deliberately use the forms of politeness in a manner obviously and insultingly insincere.

Strained Relations: Relations are just about normal but passively or actively unfriendly. There is little chance of conflict but a self-important official or officer might take petty harassment a bit too far. In short, strained relations produces many opportunities for matters to get

worse, requiring patience and an active effort to ignore minor incidents. It may be that high-level leaders on both sides want to improve matters but the reality is such that personnel at the sharp end will encounter less cosy relations.

Neutral Relations: Relations are polite but non-committal. Interactions are generally based on benefits to both parties and the prospects for the future. One party or the other may be willing to go out of their way to help, depending on the perceived value of any goodwill that may be generated, but extreme positive or negative interactions are highly unlikely.

Positive Relations: Interactions are guided by a modest amount of goodwill or perceived future benefit. More subtly, the crew of *Deepnight Revelation* will be portrayed positively by local media and scurrilous rumours about them will be less widely believed.

Passive Assistance: The Travellers have gained the approval of the faction and enjoy some modest benefits. Officials will help out or not make an issue of errors in paperwork, so long as there is no risk to them and the assistance falls within their remit. Faction members are unlikely to risk their safety or long-term financial security for the Travellers. For example, an official might help the Travellers look in the right place for information they are entitled to but is not likely to risk position helping them get something they are not supposed to have.

Active Assistance: The Travellers can expect low-level assistance and a positive attitude from almost everyone in the faction. Personnel will volunteer information or suggest useful courses of action, even if there is no gain for them, and would be willing to consider taking minor risks to help.

Friendship: The Travellers are known as good friends and benefactors to the faction and can expect a considerable degree of assistance. This might be minor, such as preferential treatment when obtaining spares, but it is consistent. The Travellers may also be treated as celebrities and could gain an entourage of well-wishers and those who hope to profit by association.

Strong Friendship: The Travellers are local heroes, whose prowess and capabilities may often be exaggerated. This means that whilst almost any faction member would be honoured to help them, the Travellers may also be expected to solve all manner of problems wherever they go.

The Referee should note that each Faction Relations Indicator represents the true situation but this might not be apparent. Indeed, a faction that hates the Travellers and plans to destroy them may well act as if it is trying to patch up strained relations. Malicious deception is a common tool of those hoping to impede others, so it is entirely possible the Travellers will not notice the real threat and think they have got away with behaving poorly towards a faction.

Starting FRI

The Faction Relations Index for each power in the region does not necessarily start at zero. The Tenipal Alliance and Sovereigndoms will be suspicious of the newcomers, for slightly different reasons and given the tensions in the area making contact with another faction first will also increase suspicions. News does not travel quickly, however, so the Travellers have at least a few weeks after making contact with the first faction before the others notice. If peaceful contact is made with another faction within the period indicated, the Contact Effect is not applied. There is no Contact Effect if another faction has already been contacted or if contact occurs before the indicated period ends.

For example, Deepnight Revelation makes contact with the Sovereigndoms. They are suspicious of the internal and external implications of a possible alliance between one of the sovereigns and the newcomers, so relations are set at -4 (strained). The Referee rolls 2D and after that many weeks – assuming peaceful contact has not been made with the Tenipal – word reaches the Tenipal Alliance that a powerful new ship is operating in conjunction with the Sovereigndoms. Starting relations with the Tenipal will be -2, reduced by 1D. The Referee rolls a 4, indicating the Tenipal Alliance will start out passively hostile to the Travellers. This can be remedied by diplomacy and fostering of better relations.

Starting FRI and Contact Effects

FACTION	FRI	CONTACT EFFECT
Tenipal Alliance	-2	After 2D weeks, relations with the Sovereigndoms are reduced by -D3 After 3D weeks, relations with the Erline Alliance are reduced by -1
Sovereigndoms	-4	After 2D weeks, relations with the Tenipal Alliance are reduced by -1D
Erline Worlds	+0	After 4D weeks, relations with the Tenipal Alliance are reduced by -1D After 4D weeks, relations with the Sovereigndoms are reduced by -1D

Changing FRI

Some actions will automatically set FRI at certain levels. An act of war, such as firing on a faction's ships without obvious necessity, will set FRI to -12 (war). Atrocities such as massacring colonists or attacking defenceless vessels will set FRI to -15 (hatred). It is possible to avoid this consequence in some circumstances, such as where it is clear to all concerned that the Travellers perceived a serious and immediate threat to their ship. A formal peace treaty will set FRI to -12 plus 1D, in other words a level of active or passive hostility, providing the faction means to honour it. There is always the possibility the faction intends to continue conflict and the treaty is a sham, in which case FRI remains unchanged but the faction will act like the war is over for the time being.

FRI can also be changed gradually over time.

Honourable routine interactions will cause a faction to like the Travellers more and establish a history of goodwill, however it can only go so far. Likewise, a habit of cheating on deals and treating the locals badly will result in bad relations but will probably not cause war. Extreme results require significant events or actions.

Each time the Travellers carry out one of the actions on the FRI Actions table, they have a chance to improve relations or avoid making things worse. A successful Diplomat check is required at the indicated difficulty. If successful, relations improve by the indicated amount in the case of positive actions. In the case of negative actions the skill check allows the reduction

in FRI to be avoided. Each action has an upper and lower limit, beyond which it cannot influence FRI. For example, no amount of cheery PR broadcasts can halt a war, nor can the same action result in an enduring friendship. Greater deeds are needed to produce results in extreme circumstances.

The Referee should be mindful of diminishing returns. If the Travellers are inclined to grind the same actions over and over again to collect enough FRI increases for their current purpose, the Referee may rule that no further increases are possible by that method. No matter how good the Travellers' shipboard parties for local dignitaries and hangers-on might be, sooner or later they will cease having the same effect.

Note that the DM for existing FRI does not affect the check to increase or decrease FRI but does affect other interactions. For example, if the Travellers have strained relations with the Tenipal Alliance, they suffer DM-1 on Diplomat checks to set up a meeting at which they offer to transfer some useful technology. If the meeting is set up and the offer is made, the FRI DM does not apply to an attempt to increase FRI with the deal.

Routine Poor Treatment refers to low-level racism or contemptuous behaviour towards the 'poor dumb yokels' or perhaps refusal to provide assistance that seems reasonable to the requesting faction. This factor can occur as a result of petty local politics or a self-important official willing to make an interstellar issue out of something minor. For example, a local official

FRI Actions

ACTION	DIFFICULTY	UPPER LIMIT	LOWER LIMIT	FRI MODIFICATION
Blatant massacre or atrocity	None	None	None	Automatic hatred (-15)
Act of war	None	None	None	Automatic war (-12)
Routine poor treatment or minor insult	Routine (6+)	None	-7	-1
Major insult, defaulting on a major trade deal	Average (8+)	None	-11	-1
Serious incident	Difficult (10+)	None	-14	-D3
Well-handled initial contact	Average (8+)	None	None	+D3
Routine planet/port visit	Difficulty (10+)	8	-7	+1
Significant 'good deed'	Average (8+)	8	None	+1
Major 'good deed'	Average (8+)	11	None	+1
Profound 'good deed'	Automatic	None	None	+D3
Beneficial trade or minor transfer of knowledge	Difficult (10+)	9	-11	+1
Major transfer of technology	Routine (6+)	11	-12	+D3
Astounding transfer of technology	Automatic	None	None	+2D3



wants to get one over on a rival by being seen to have the Travellers at his beck and call, and they defy him. He uses his connections and influence to punish them by misrepresenting an incident as their fault, necessitating a Diplomat check to avoid widespread damage to their relations with the faction.

Major Insults include actions that cause the faction to lose face or blatant incidences of mistreatment. For example, the Travellers agree to carry out a high-profile task or deliver important technology in return for something they want, then default on the deal. Treating a faction this way could harm their standing with the others and will certainly cause serious resentment.

Serious Incidents include a confrontation between warships, which does not escalate beyond posturing and threats (and perhaps warning shots) or a public falling-out between the Travellers and a faction. Manhandling the planetary president off their ship – whether they deserve it or not – would be a serious incident, as would firing on rioters, even in self-defence. Sometimes there are no good options, especially when a faction is courting trouble as a result of already poor relations.

Initial Contact refers to the early impression made by the Travellers. This might be rumours and tales told by local spacers of an impressive new ship entering their space or a staged entry into orbit with messages

of goodwill broadcasting on all channels. To qualify as 'well handled' the Travellers need to make a good overall impression, which will typically be a combination of courteous treatment of any ships encountered, respect for local customs, smart ship-handling and well-turned-out personnel. The Referee should not reward the Travellers for being lackadaisical. If they are slovenly or do not make an effort to impress there will be no modification to FRI and the Referee should refuse requests to make the Diplomat check, just in case the Travellers can sleaze their way into making a good impression.

Routine Visits occur whenever the Travellers arrive at a world, even if they have been there before. All visits to worlds within a faction count as routine after the first impression has been made, unless there are unusual circumstances. It is possible to establish good working relations with a faction by simply being seen to treat their people fairly but although routine positive contact will gradually improve relations there are limits to how much can be achieved this way.

'Good Deeds' are unusual actions that create a positive impression. Most require some effort on the part of the Travellers but not necessarily any risk. Most good deeds are of a minor nature, with more profound actions generally being beneficial to larger numbers of people. For example, offering to get a handful of people home quickly when *Deepnight Revelation* passes their

homeworld is a minor good deed that will build goodwill up to a point. Jumping to the last known position of an overdue starship to conduct a search and rescuing survivors would be a major good deed. To qualify as a profound good deed the Travellers would need to take risky actions and save many lives. Defending a colony against a small raid would be a major good deed at most; stopping a Citadel from making a bombardment would be a profound deed.

Trade and Technological Transfers are normally minor in effect but build goodwill over time. A transaction where a local faction gains a modest amount of equipment or resources they would not normally be able to obtain, or is given knowledge they would not normally have access to, would be considered a beneficial trade. The Travellers can build goodwill over time by engaging in trades of this sort. A more significant transfer of knowledge or very beneficial trade will give the faction something significant – a jump-capable scout vessel or the theoretical knowledge underlying a major technology like advanced fusion power or the jump drive would be considered to be in this category. An astounding trade or gift of technology is a game-changer for the faction. Secrets of high-jump drives, the ability to make bonded superdense materials or build a powerful particle accelerator weapon would represent such a transfer as it would put the faction centuries ahead of their rivals in that field.

Other Factors may also apply at the Referee's discretion and some transactions might have more than one result. Relations with one faction may be damaged if word gets out the Travellers are giving powerful weapons or advanced jump drives to a rival – and, of course, this might not actually be true. Similarly, passing knowledge to a rival might undo the goodwill benefits of giving it to the first faction.

Effects of Faction Relations

If the Travellers can establish good relations with one or more factions they will gain certain advantages. Likewise, bad relations can result in hindrance. The FRI DM is applied to all interactions with the faction, subject to the special considerations listed here.

Hatred and War: These are special states that require a trigger incident. It might be possible for a war to break out by accident and with nobody actually wanting it, however it is not something that will happen lightly. Most of the time those involved will try to step back from the brink. Once either of these states is in place, improvement in relations can only be achieved by great effort. Typically, a major gesture accompanied by formal diplomatic overtures will be required to bring hostilities to

an end or start a move towards reconciliation. If hatred or war exists, the Travellers and their assets will be attacked whenever the odds are in favour of the enemy and, occasionally, when they are not. There is no chance of a beneficial exchange of information; any data will have to be extorted from the enemy or taken by force.

Hostility: A hostile power may or may not be open about it but will work to impede the Travellers. False information may be given or delays imposed on important tasks. Attempts to interfere with the Travellers' plans may be subtle, such as applying pressure on contractors to go slow on a supply delivery, or blatant depending on circumstances. It is very unlikely a hostile faction will supply information they know the Travellers need, unless the deal is extremely biased in their favour or they have an ulterior motive. Information supplied may be incomplete, misleading or downright false.

Strained, Neutral and Positive Relations: Most interactions take place in a normal manner and tend to be more or less balanced in terms of benefit to both sides. Information provided will, in general, be true as far as the faction knows and any shortfall or falsehood is likely to be accidental or the result of a local issue. The faction will not go out of its way to help or support the Travellers, however, unless there is a potential gain in the future. A faction's vessels are unlikely to assist *Deepnight Revelation* if she gets into a fight with another faction but would fight alongside her against a known common enemy. Thus a faction that does not perceive the Citadels as a threat to the whole region will stand aside and let the Travellers fight their own battles.

Assistance: Citizens and officials will voluntarily assist the Travellers in small ways and starships might try to head off a clash by warning that firing on *Deepnight Revelation* will require them to intervene. Whether they actually do so is an open question. They might join a fight but a stern protest is more likely, especially if the Travellers seem able to handle the situation. Such a protest will then be referred to the faction's government, and thereby to foreign ambassadors, and might have consequences sometime later... but is not likely to assist the Travellers all that much at the time. A faction willing to actively or passively assist the Travellers will make known to them it has useful information for trade and may even offer it voluntarily.

Friendship: Friendship is a special state, not lightly earned. The government and citizens feel they owe the Travellers something and will help them wherever possible. This is a two-way street, of course (friends help each other as and when they can) so the faction will

expect the Travellers to behave similarly. Information will be volunteered just because the Travellers might find it helpful and ships will assist the Travellers even if they do not really need to.

Critical Information and Actions

Certain information and actions may be critical to the progress of the adventure. The Information & Actions table indicates the minimum positive state required for a faction to make information available to the Travellers or undertake an action. It is possible the Travellers will obtain information another way or create circumstances in which the faction feels it has to act, regardless of the fact that they have not met the minimum relations to do so – there are many ways the Travellers can approach the problems in this adventure. However, if the Travellers build good relations they will be rewarded in the manner indicated.

The faction attitudes before and after a slash indicate ‘may reveal or act’/‘will reveal or act’.

May Reveal or Act indicates the faction will present the information or take action if they believe there is a need or benefit but will do so on their terms, which usually means requesting something in return.

Will Reveal or Act indicates the faction will volunteer information or take action without asking anything in return. They may do this anyway if there is a major

benefit – for example, a faction will fight alongside the Travellers against a Citadel they believe is a threat to them – but a ‘will reveal or act’ state indicates they will send ships to take part in a battle against a Citadel that will probably never threaten them and may even assist a hostile faction if the Travellers insist on doing so.

N/A indicates the faction does not know the relevant information or cannot undertake that action. For example, the Tenipal Alliance does not know anything for sure about the Citadels, although they have heard the odd rumour. The Erline know a lot about them but would prefer not to admit the whole truth, whilst the Sovereigns are relatively keen to give what information they have to the Travellers because they think it may create a situation to their advantage.

It is relatively easy to get the Erline Worlds to commit to an alliance against the Citadels. Indeed, they may propose one and offer the Travellers assistance in crossing the Great Rift in return. The other factions are more difficult to convince – the Tenipal do not really know about the Citadels and do not feel threatened. An alliance, if one is forged, supersedes most other considerations in terms of inter-faction relations. Unless all-out war is in progress, the factions will put aside their differences long enough to defeat the Citadels if they can be convinced of the need.

Information & Actions

INFORMATION OR ACTION	TENIPAL ALLIANCE	SOVREIGNDOMS	ERLINE WORLDS
Existence of the Citadels	N/A	Strained Relations/ Positive Relations	Positive Relations/ Passive Assistance
Origins of the Citadels	N/A	N/A	Passive Assistance/ Active Assistance
Fight against the Citadels in self-defence	Always	Always	Always
Join an alliance against the Citadels and conduct local operations	Passive Assistance/Active Assistance	Passive Assistance/ Active Assistance	Passive Hostility/ Strained Relations
Contribute to an offensive against the original Citadel	Active Assistance/ Friendship	Active Assistance/ Friendship	Positive Relations/ Passive Assistance
Knowledge of Great Rift crossing point	N/A	Active Assistance/ Friendship	Passive Assistance/ Active Assistance
Active assistance in crossing the Great Rift	N/A	N/A	Active Assistance/ Friendship

MAKING CONTACT

Early exploration of the NSY-S region will be much the same as any other area, although the Travellers might pick up some signals that make them realise there are other starfarers in the region. First contact might be with a starship, which is likely if the Travellers spend any significant time in a system within 3 parsecs of a homeworld and possible at greater distances. It is quite possible that ships might not be encountered, as none of the local powers has large numbers and most of those are involved in operations on routes directly between the worlds of their own faction. Only a few exploration and research vessels venture far off this well-beaten path.

It may be that the first the Travellers know of a starfaring race is when they emerge from jump in the middle of an in-system shipping lane, with local traffic control asking who they are in an unintelligible language and primitive system defence craft scrambling in their direction. Missing the signs of a local starfaring race means the Travellers will have to throw together a first contact mission on the fly. Once they have contacted one of the local powers it is inevitable they will learn about the others, so they should not be caught unprepared a second time. The Referee should keep in mind the animosity between some of the powers, which may result in less than accurate information being provided, and the fact that the Sovereigndoms use equipment derived from traditional designs used in the Erline Worlds and have Tenipal personnel. This might cause all manner of confusion.

PLAYING THE FIRST CONTACT

It is not possible to predict how and when the Travellers will encounter each race in the region but there will be a first contact of some sort followed by an initial diplomatic meeting. This should be played out, allowing the Travellers to get an impression – perhaps a false impression – of the characteristics of this power. The Erline Worlds are confident, the Tenipal nervous, the Sovereigndoms arrogant. The following notes indicate what information might be offered at an initial meeting if the Travellers are willing to reciprocate with useful data of their own.

Diplomatic contact with each race is an important event and should be played out. It may be a bit of a scramble, with the Travellers trying to make a good impression

whilst repair crews struggle with major system failures, or they may find themselves being treated with great pomp and ceremony – and having no idea how they are supposed to act or respond. Formal contact will be an occasion for honour guards, dress uniforms and attempts to say something meaningful in a language that is still being translated.

CONTACTING THE TENIPAL

The Tenipal Alliance is the least widely-travelled of the three local powers and likely to be suspicious of newcomers as a result of incidents with the Sovereigndoms. As a result, the Tenipal Relations Index begins at -2, although this can be improved by a well-handled first contact.

The Tenipal are reserved, guarded and obviously unsure what to make of the new arrivals. Even when communications are established they will stall and try to learn more about the Travellers and their ship by way of rather clumsy questioning reminiscent of contact with the Alikeia. Whilst suspicious of the newcomers and their intentions, the Tenipal are also awed by the obvious sophistication of *Deepnight Revelation* and keen not to offend the new arrivals. Thus it will not be hard to convince the Tenipal to agree to a diplomatic meeting, although it will quickly become apparent they are not willing to agree to anything without building trust and are frankly a bit scared of the Travellers.

The Tenipal will go along with the Travellers' suggestions for how a formal meeting should be conducted. If the Travellers offer no ideas the Tenipal will request a meeting aboard *Deepnight Revelation*, to be recorded by their own media people as well as anyone the Travellers wish to assign. If this goes ahead, astute Travellers can glean a lot of information about the Tenipal Alliance from the proceedings. Notably, the Tenipal are nervous and a bit naïve. They seem completely unaware of the intelligence gathering opportunities inherent in such a meeting and are eager to please without actually committing themselves to anything. They are also reluctant to ask for favours, information or anything else the Travellers do not offer them directly.



The Tenipal ambassador is named Alhrendhal, as near as humans can pronounce her multi-nuanced title/name. She was, until a few hours previously, a senior administrator in the Alliance government and has no more experience of first contact situations than any other Tenipal. She is very polite but uncomfortable as she is outside not just her own experience but that of her whole race. The Tenipal have learned how to interact with the Erline and Sovereigndoms. This is not always positive but relations are generally predictable. The Travellers represent something new and uncertain, so Alhrendhal is acutely aware that her words and actions could have repercussion across the whole Tenipal Alliance.

The clumsy first interactions with the Tenipal might annoy the Travellers but if the Referee handles the situation well they may feel sorry for Alhrendhal and anyone else involved in the first contact. How the situation goes depends very much on the attitude of the Travellers.

If the Travellers are aggressive or pushy they will find the Tenipal fairly easy to bully. TRI will be reduced by -1 immediately and the Tenipal will offer some information on local star systems along with flimsy lies about how powerful their aerospace defences are. The Alliance can be coerced into providing spares and provisions but cooperation will be minimal thereafter, especially if the Tenipal realise the Travellers are not willing to be appeased and sent on their way. An additional DM-2 applies to all interactions with the Tenipal – such as bargaining for supplies – until the Travellers demonstrate a more friendly approach.

If the Travellers are neutral in their approach they will find dealing with the Tenipal rather tedious but can establish working relations without undue difficulty.

If the Travellers offer minor gifts and take a friendly approach they will find the Tenipal reserved at first but soon they will begin tutoring the diplomatic party from *Deepnight Revelation* in the niceties of formal address and social ritual. Information on their culture will be volunteered, although with few details of colony location or size at first. DM+1 applies to diplomatic and commercial endeavours if the Travellers maintain a friendly posture.

The Tenipal can offer the following information, although whether it is volunteered or not depends on the Travellers' relations with the Alliance.

- The Tenipal Alliance is small and centralised. Exploration is taking place but is not a great priority.
- Relations with the Sovereigndoms are poor, as they are a bunch of pushy loudmouths who enslaved some of our ancestors. They cannot be trusted.
- The Erline Worlds are more advanced than we are but not immensely so. Relations with them are better than with the Sovereigndoms as they are further away and less reprehensible.

As relations improve and interactions continue, the Travellers can obtain more information, such as the fact that the Sovereigndoms are ruled by the same species as the Erline Worlds but have a very different culture.

CONTACTING THE SOVREIGNDOMS

Ships from the Sovereigndoms can be encountered over a wider area than those of the Tenipal Alliance. They are no more technologically capable but the dispersed nature of the Sovereigndoms has led to a culture of ranging more widely than the Tenipal are likely to do. The Sovereigndoms are beset with constant internal politics and manoeuvring for position, to the point where nobody really trusts anyone else. As a result, initial SRI is set to -4.

It is likely that the first contact the Travellers will have with the Sovereigndoms will be with one of their ships, whose captain will appoint themselves ambassador to the newcomers. Such an individual will have their own advancement at heart when conducting dealings and whilst they will understand that a good deal benefiting both sides has long-term advantages for them, there is always the chance the 'ambassador' will short change one or both sides, then duck out and blame everyone else.

The Sovereigndoms will want to learn as much as possible from, and about, the Travellers so will propose they send a delegation aboard *Deepnight Revelation*. The diplomatic party is led by an individual whose name translates as 'Correct-point-of-contact'. This is, of course, a new title/name invented for the role and is more about self-publicity than any official position.

It will quickly become apparent that the Sovereigndoms are used to what might be called 'sophisticated' interstellar relations. Even using a half-learned language, their dealings are convoluted and beset with clever innuendo that might trap an unwary diplomat into a bad deal. The Sovereigndoms are also rather obviously self-important beyond their capabilities. This can make them very difficult to deal with, since they act and expect to be treated like a great power and the only way to demonstrate their weakness would be to take actions that destroy diplomatic relations. Smart Travellers will learn to play to their collective and individual egos, and in time their pomposity may become amusing rather than troublesome.

If the Travellers are aggressive or pushy the Sovereigndoms will not be dismayed or offended. This is how they expect powerful people – or those who claim to be powerful – to behave. Posturing, thinly veiled threats and pointless quibbles raised just to show how important the negotiator is are the stock in trade of the Sovereigndoms. The Travellers get no diplomatic bonus for behaving this way but it is more effective than other options. The Sovereigndoms will at least rein in their more extravagant demands.

If the Travellers are neutral in their approach the Sovereigndoms will treat them with more or less polite contempt and consider them a bit weak. Demands will be inflated and Sovereigndoms negotiators will assume the Travellers are bargaining from a feeble position. It will take a great deal to get them to realise this is not the case. DM-1 applies to all diplomatic and economic interactions until the impression of weakness is dispelled.

If the Travellers offer minor gifts and take a friendly approach the Sovereigndoms will think of them as helpless prey to be bullied into a bad deal. Negotiators will make ridiculous demands and the Travellers will need to bargain hard to reduce them to sensible levels. Every interaction will be approached as if the Travellers are supplicants begging for scraps from their betters. DM-3 applies to interactions until the Travellers change this impression.

The Sovereigndoms can offer the following information, although whether it is volunteered or not depends on the Travellers' relations with them.

- The Sovereigndoms are a powerful interstellar state with excellent starships. The current negotiator's home sovereigndom is the greatest of them all. The others are all inferior but still more important than the other powers of local space or the Travellers. The current negotiator speaks for his own people and the whole of the Sovereigndoms and is an extremely powerful personage.
- The Tenipal Alliance is a weak power that resents the fact that some of their people came to live in the Sovereigndoms and have a far better standard of living than on any Alliance world.
- The Erline Worlds are populated by members of the same species as the Sovereigndoms' rulers but they have a weak and strange political system that makes them ineffectual. They rely on the Sovereigndoms to solve their problems and often to negotiate for them.

Whether or not this information is true is of less importance than whether it is useful to the Sovereigndoms' agenda. If good relations are forged they can offer more information but it will always have a self-serving slant. They know about the Citadels but not their origins. During contact, if at all possible, several members (probably low-ranking Tenipal) will 'stupidly wander off and get lost' in order to get a look at the Travellers and their ship without close supervision. The Sovereigndom diplomatic party will be puzzled and worried if they do not detect members of the *Deepnight Revelation* delegation doing the same. They will wonder if they have failed to spot some incredibly subtle

information gathering exercise or whether the Travellers are so powerful they do not feel the need to gain advantages in this manner. This may unnerve them but it translates into even more extravagant posturing.

CONTACTING THE ERLINE WORLDS

The Erline is the most advanced of the local races and sends out ships over greater distances. Contact is likely almost anywhere. The Erline are confident of their position in the universe and whilst they may be impressed by *Deepnight Revelation*, they are not fearful unless given a reason to be. The Erline Relations Index begins at +0.

The Erline Worlds will make a pretty good attempt at a formal first contact. It is clear they are improvising but the elements are well orchestrated. The most likely scenario for a formal meeting is an invitation to visit one of the Erline Worlds, to be greeted with a parade and flypasts of craft from the starport. It is clear they are making an attempt to impress and offer suitable courtesy, and will be embarrassed by the inevitable small gaffes made by inexperienced personnel. Politely failing to notice any mis-steps will be taken as a sign of goodwill and respect.

Erline diplomats are cautious and inclined to be formal, expecting clarification of all manner of minor details, but it will be apparent there are valid reasons for not wanting a misunderstanding. Once the Erline realise *Deepnight Revelation* is capable of helping them deal with the Citadels they will begin working towards an alliance that might include the other regional powers. However, they may not immediately reveal this plan.

The Erline delegation will be led by an official whose name translates roughly as New-Potential-Friends-Facilitator, which will probably be modified to something more comfortable by the Travellers. The delegation will be polite and try not to give offence but they are not prepared to be bullied or treated as yokels.

If the Travellers are aggressive or pushy they will find the Erline become much more formal and guarded. They do not reply in kind but will begin asking pointed questions along the lines of 'what trade can we make that will get you on your way as soon as possible?'. DM-2 will apply to all interactions until this attitude is demonstrated to have changed.

If the Travellers are neutral in their approach the Erline will respond well. Polite, cautious and honest dealings will please the Erline and DM+1 will apply to future interactions.

If the Travellers offer minor gifts and take a friendly approach the Erline will wonder why they are doing this. The Travellers are clearly powerful but seek to win favour through giving gifts rather than making a fair deal; this seems a little odd to the Erline, who may wonder what they are up to. However, they will not be upset at receiving something for nothing.

The Erline Worlds can offer the following information, although whether it is volunteered or not depends on the Travellers' relations with the alliance.

- The Erline Worlds are scattered all over the region. There are other Erline on some planets who are not part of the Erline Worlds.
- The Erline Worlds is the most advanced starfaring culture in the known region. Only one other intelligent race has been discovered, although there are different cultures.
- There was an earlier Erline civilisation that established colonies on many worlds before collapsing. Some were reintegrated when starflight was rediscovered.
- The Sovreigndoms are ruled by people from the same species, descended from the scattered colonies of the first Erline starfaring civilisation. They have a very different culture but are considered distant kin.
- The Tenipal Alliance is rather primitive and unaccountably hostile at times but, other than the odd trade mission, is ignored as the Tenipal are not much of a threat.

As relations improve and interactions continue, the Travellers can obtain more information. The Erline Worlds will approach the subject of the Citadels and the fall of their original civilisation very guardedly, revealing as little as possible until they can see a path to obtaining the Travellers' assistance. If they learn the Travellers are looking for a crossing point on the Great Rift they may offer to help with data or practical assistance but need help with the Citadels and will use assistance as a bargaining point to get it.

QUID PRO QUO

Once contact is made with one or more of the local factions, the Travellers have many opportunities to trade information, materials and services. Their Credits are no good here, of course, but they may have materials that would be extremely valuable to the locals. Their vessel has capabilities that will allow them to quickly and easily solve problems for a local faction and, of course, their knowledge could advance the science of any local faction immeasurably. Whether or not it is wise to carry out these actions or provide knowledge is a question the Travellers will need to answer for themselves.

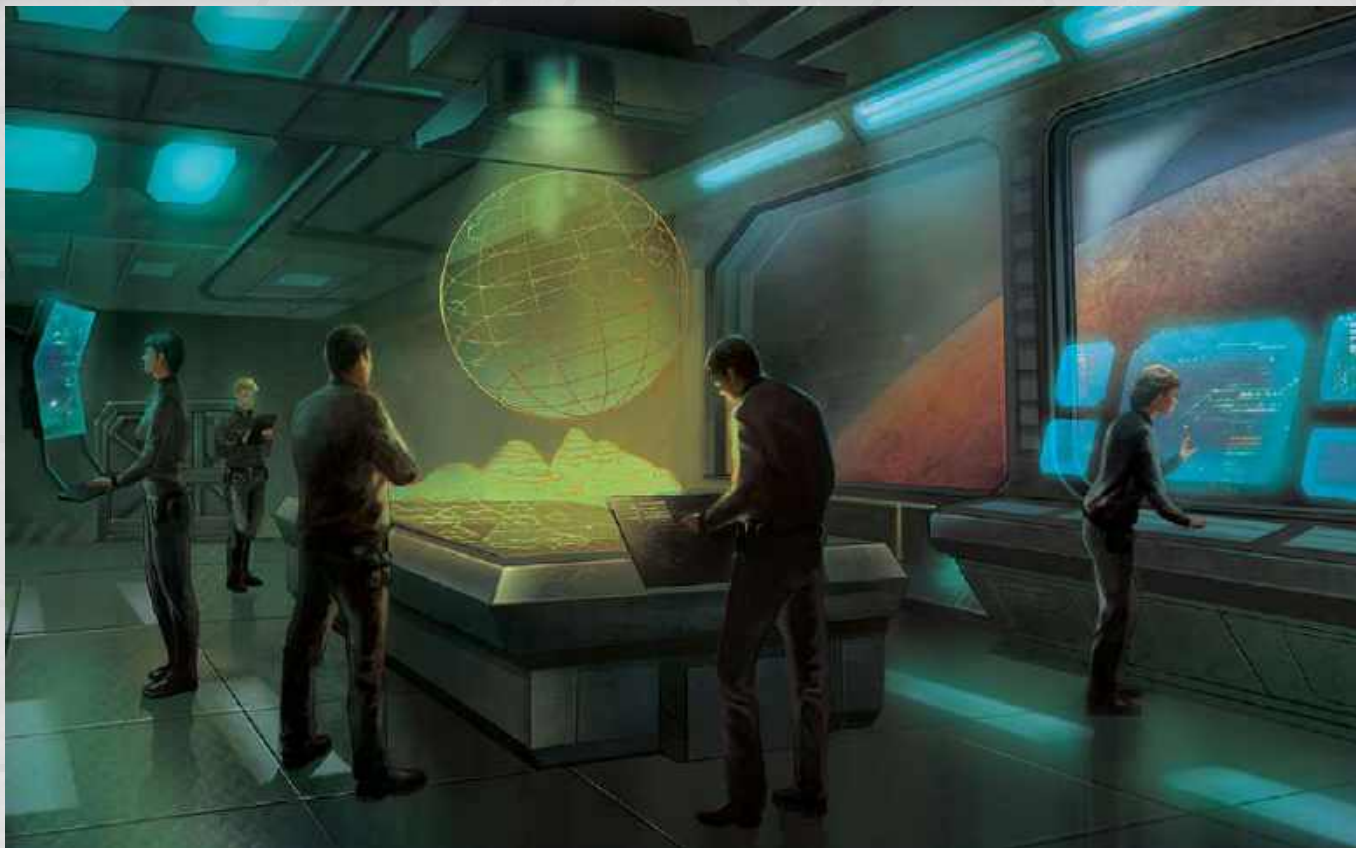
The Referee should not feel the need to rush this adventure to a conclusion. If the Travellers want to spend time in the NSY-S region they can do so, possibly having many adventures beyond the scope of

this one. At least some of these adventures can result from general exploration but some may be triggered by a request from a faction for assistance. The NSY-S Adventures table gives an indication of the value of various actions on the part of a local faction and indicate the value placed upon them by the provider. A certain amount of negotiation is possible, of course.

Actions are open to Referee interpretation but value is rated in terms of what the local faction thinks of the deal. The Travellers might consider it nothing to jump a few parsecs away and conduct some basic exploration they were going to do anyway, however data on a cluster of star systems they will not be able to send an exploration ship to for some years could be very valuable to a faction.

NSY-S Adventures

ACTION	VALUE
Detailed survey of a local star system	Minor
Detailed survey of a star system at least 4 parsecs distant	Moderate
Cursory survey of 3–5 local star systems	Moderate
Cursory survey of 3–5 star systems at least 4 parsecs distant	Major
Detailed survey of 3–5 star systems at least 4 parsecs distant	Impressive
Obtain small quantity of rare materials (around 10 tons)	Minor
Obtain significant quantity of rare materials (around 100 tons)	Moderate
Fabricate modest quantity of advanced tools, spares or equipment (around 10 tons)	Minor
Fabricate significant quantity of advanced tools, spares or equipment (around 100 tons)	Moderate
Transport or errand, totalling at least 6 parsecs	Moderate
Emergency transport or errand	Impressive
Rescue of distressed ship or assistance to colony	Moderate to Impressive
Transfer of minor knowledge or technology	Moderate
Transfer of major knowledge or technology	Major
Information on a single star system	Minor
Information on a group of 3-5 systems	Moderate
Detailed information on a single subject	Minor to Moderate
Free Access to all publicly available information	Moderate
Use of shipyard equipment	Moderate
Priority repairs	Major
Replacement of critical item requiring major effort on the part of the faction	Impressive



Similarly, the Travellers' workshops can knock out items of immense value to the local factions; perfect ball-bearings, drill bits composed of alloys that never become dulled when working on locally available materials, sub-assemblies that simplify construction of starships and vehicles. This can only be done on a small scale but even just a few of the right tools can make a big difference. If the Travellers were to stick around for a few years they could conduct a technological uplift operation for a favoured faction but unless they are willing to do so their contribution will have to take the form of self-contained items and technologies, or blocks of scientific knowledge that can be digested over time.

Generally even dealings will build goodwill as a routine fair interaction but bargains do not have to be absolutely balanced to be considered fair. If the Travellers agree to head out and quickly survey half a dozen star systems for a faction, and mine some rare materials for them into the bargain in return for being permitted full use of the faction's shipbuilding facilities when they need repairs, this is a roughly even deal and would be considered fair.

As a general rule, the Tenipal Alliance and the Erline Worlds will play fair – although may drive a hard bargain. The Sovereigns will try to inflate the importance of whatever they do for the Travellers by a level or downplay how useful the Travellers' actions are to them. For

example, if the Tenipal requested *Deepnight Revelation* drop everything and respond to an emergency a few parsecs away they would consider this Impressive and would be willing to reciprocate at the same level. The Sovereigns might try to consider this a Major favour and offer something less in return, probably inflating its value into the bargain.

INFLUENCING FACTIONS

The Referee can come up with an almost infinite amount of requests for assistance and ways for the Travellers to build relations with the local factions. The following adventure seeds can be expanded, as necessary, and may lead to further complications as the situation unfolds.

SURVEY MISSIONS

The Travellers are requested to use their high jump capability and advanced equipment to carry out a survey of a particular location or star system. This might be a promising colony location or follow-up to an earlier exploration voyage. The faction might fail to mention problems that had previously occurred in this location, hoping the Travellers will deal with whatever they find and save the faction some trouble.

This sort of work is the meat and drink of the *Deepnight* expedition and would not ordinarily pose much of a problem. However, there may be complications if the survey turns up something interesting and the commissioning faction wants to claim it or expects the Travellers to bring back tons of samples and specimens with them.

Survey Mission: Joint Operation

The Travellers receive a request from the faction they are visiting, which wants a survey of a handful of star systems and a planetside expedition to any habitable or borderline worlds that may be discovered. Their combination of expertise and advanced equipment will permit the Travellers to make short work of a survey that might take a local ship 10 times as long to do half as well. The overall mission is considered a Major undertaking at least; if a habitable world is found and good data is obtained, this rises to Impressive.

The commissioning faction wishes to send along a scientific/exploration party consisting of half a dozen experts and about twice as many support personnel and guards. This should not seem all that onerous but when the exploration team arrives they have tons of sensitive equipment, vehicles and specialist supplies that all need to be stowed aboard.

The delegation themselves are for the most part polite enough to let the Travellers get on with the mission but it is possible some personnel might become over-enthusiastic to the point of becoming pushy or excessively concerned with how their equipment is treated. There is always the chance the party will try to find out the Travellers' secrets or get into parts of *Deepnight Revelation* where they are not supposed to be. The Travellers may have to deal with a diplomatic incident caused by an over-inquisitive 'research assistant' getting injured in a dangerous part of the ship whilst spying.

The exploration component of the mission can be handled like any other, with additional roleplaying opportunities due to the inclusion of a faction party. Things will get very interesting once a planet suitable for exploration is found. The faction party is keen to reach every landmark first and generally outdo the better-equipped personnel from *Deepnight Revelation*. This over-competitive approach may lead to recklessness, requiring the Travellers to rescue their alien colleagues from a disaster of their own making.

Overall, the survey mission should not be anything the Travellers cannot handle but commissions of this sort can be used to lead the Travellers into areas where the Referee has placed something interesting for them to

find or to bring about an encounter with another faction. That could create an awkward first contact situation, especially if the exploration team aboard have bad things to say about the faction being encountered.

TRANSPORT MISSIONS

Deepnight Revelation can cover immense distances – by local standards – in a single jump and can carry a fair amount of cargo. Trading some repairs or supplies for a transportation mission that would otherwise tie up one or more local ships for several weeks might seem like a good deal to any of the factions. Indeed, it is possible they might find it a bit too convenient to rely on the Travellers and start expecting them to run every errand or catch up with every long overdue personnel transfer.

Transport missions might suit the Travellers' agenda. Essentially, the faction will be rewarding the Travellers for moving around the region while carrying out exploration they might have done anyway. The crew will be happy enough to do this for a while, so long as they are carrying out some meaningful scientific or exploration work at the same time, which makes these relatively mundane missions an ideal way to build goodwill with the local factions without antagonising the crew.

Deepnight Revelation might also be asked to collect data from remote outposts or set up automated probes. If the Travellers leave port to set up a remote data collection station and a local ship launches at the same time to collect the first set of data, this might underline just how much of an advantage the Travellers have over local vessels.

The transportation mission presented here is just one of many possibilities. A typical mission might be a delivery of personnel or items to a colony but there is always the possibility of something more interesting or a combination of tasks. For example, the Travellers might be asked to use their advanced mineral extraction equipment to obtain rare materials from a distant asteroid belt, then deliver the cargo to a colony.

Transportation Mission: Resupply Exploration Ship

The Travellers are approached by representatives of the local faction with a proposal. They have an exploration ship operating about 8–10 parsecs from their core area, which is coming to the end of its supplies and due to turn for home in a few weeks. At the time the mission was launched there was a possibility of an extension if a suitable resupply vessel was available to make a rendezvous but the ship earmarked for the job had to be re-tasked. Standing orders are for the exploration ship to

wait for three weeks at the rendezvous point, conducting a detailed system survey, then return to base if no supply ship arrives with new orders.

Deepnight Revelation could easily intercept the vessel and deliver the supplies and additional crew required to extend the mission by several months. A local ship would take several weeks to make the trip out to the rendezvous and back but *Deepnight Revelation* can do it vastly quicker. This will allow the exploration ship to chart several more systems before heading home. The local faction would consider this mission to be in the high end of Moderate value, perhaps even Major depending on what the Travellers ask for in return.

The mission is simple: make a couple of jumps out to a rendezvous point, deliver supplies and bring a few of the crew home along with the data thus gathered. It could be combined with other operations such as exploration of systems the Travellers think might be interesting. On the face of it, there is little that could or should go wrong with such a mission and no duplicity on the part of the commissioning faction. However, there are likely to be a few complications.

The trip out to the rendezvous point requires two or at most three jumps, which are routine. *Deepnight Revelation* will follow a pre-planned route and hopefully should not have to remain on-station for more than a week or so before making the rendezvous. She will carry a party of around 20 replacement crewmembers and scientists, plus a considerable amount of supplies. The Travellers may have to solve some accommodation issues regarding the alien crewmembers, especially since some of them are prone to wandering into parts of the ship they are not supposed to have access to. This might be simple curiosity or thinly veiled spying. Their scientists will, of course, want to know how every instrument aboard the ship works.

There are no serious problems until *Deepnight Revelation* emerges from jump in the target system. The exploration vessel is already there and has been conducting a survey whilst she waits. She has been out for several months already and her crew are completely unaware that the Travellers have arrived in their region. The reaction among her crew ranges from awe through envy to deep unease at seeing such a big and advanced ship suddenly appear where the expected supply ship should have been.

There is virtually no chance of this encounter turning violent. The range is long and whilst the other crew are startled and wary, they are not looking for a fight. The Travellers have communication protocols for the exploration ship and representatives of its parent

government on board. It would take truly idiotic actions on the part of the Travellers to create a shooting incident, although that possibility will always exist.

The first task is to establish communications and explain to the exploration ship that the Travellers are helping the faction government. After this, relations will thaw rapidly. This would be a suitable occasion for a formal reception aboard *Deepnight Revelation* and the locals will certainly push for one. A CEI check can be used to abstract the preparations to receive visitors and the Referee should make a CEI check for the local crew using an assumed ECEI of 6. Matters might get a bit fraught as the exploration ship's shuttle makes a bad approach or awkward as the leader of their delegation faceplants on the boarding ramp, requiring some quick thinking to avoid embarrassment or more serious problems.

Once formalities are completed it should be a simple matter to transfer supplies and personnel, although this might take time due to incompatible fittings and working procedures. Again, an ECEI check can be used to see how well this goes, with the Travellers on hand to deal with anything that goes awry. Eventually the exploration ship will proceed on its way and the Travellers will be able to return to base or continue with their own mission.

DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS

The Travellers may be asked to convey a diplomatic party to a homeworld of one of the other powers or perhaps from one sovreinndom to another. This apparently innocuous request could have serious repercussions for the Travellers even if the faction they are helping does not deliberately take advantage. The latter is very likely, since the political capital to be gained by portraying the Travellers as allies is considerable. The Travellers might also find themselves carrying out a 'flag-showing' mission on behalf of a faction under the guise of doing something more mundane. For example, the Travellers might be asked to deliver personnel or supplies to a colony, not realising it is on the brink of rebellion and local officials are portraying the visit as a threat of intervention by the faction's powerful new allies. The Sovereigndoms in particular will be devious about this sort of mission and will happily tell all manner of lies.

Diplomatic Mission: Showing a Different Flag

The Travellers receive an innocuous sounding request to carry a trade delegation to a colony of one of the rival factions. This would be a major undertaking for a local ship but *Deepnight Revelation* can be there and back quickly. This is an opportunity to make contact with another faction and perhaps offer trade samples of the Travellers' own. If they have not yet realised the value

of small components, their Mission team's experts will point out that *Deepnight Revelation's* workshops can fabricate items that will last for many years and make local machinery more efficient.

It may be desirable to provide such items as trade goods rather than handing over knowledge or full-sized systems that could upset the balance of power. For example, a few tons of advanced parts for machine tools will benefit the local economy and please the faction that receives them. A set of complete jump-4 drives might be better received but they would give that faction an advantage that could trigger war – either because the faction felt it could win or because the others felt they had to prevent it from trying.

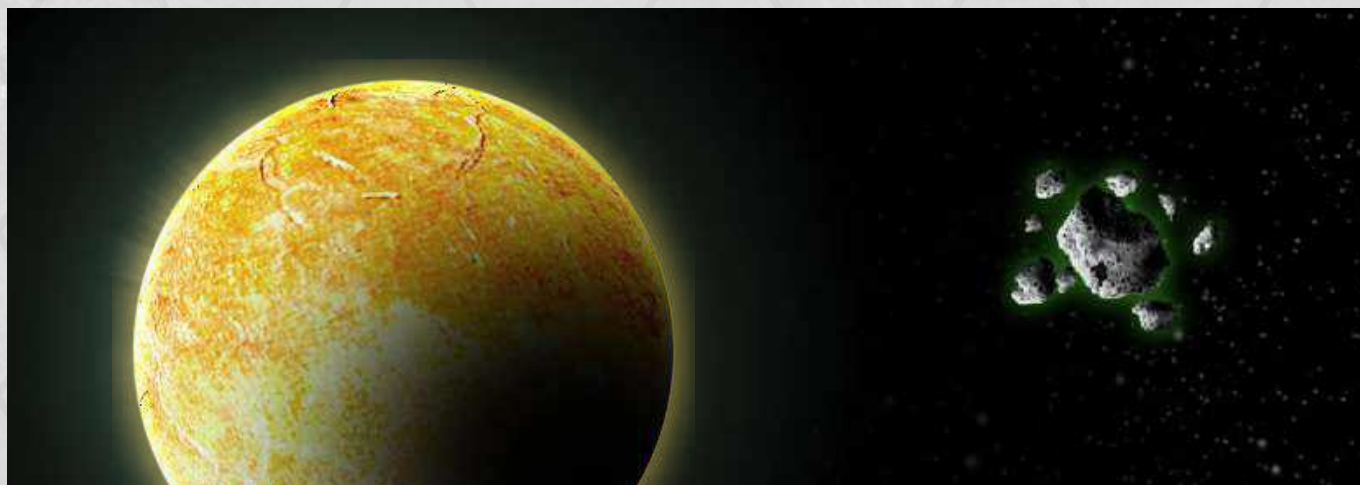
On the face of it, the commissioning faction simply wants to undertake trade negotiations but they have another agenda. Their diplomatic party has orders to portray the Travellers as close allies, impressing the target faction and gaining both short-term and long-term diplomatic advantages. How deceitful the diplomats are depends on the commissioning faction and what they think they can get away with. If the Travellers have been easy going in their dealings, the faction will think it can get away with stretching the truth a very great deal. Travellers who have taken a sterner line will find the commissioning faction a lot less inclined to risk offending them.

As might be expected, *Deepnight Revelation* is challenged by system defences when she arrives. If the Travellers choose to leave establishing diplomatic relations to their guests, tensions seem to be defused quickly. However, this gives the diplomatic party a chance to say whatever they like. The Travellers may later find out they have been portrayed as vassals to one of the Sovereigndoms, or as unshakably loyal friends and protectors of one of the other factions. It may become apparent from how they are treated that their passengers have not told the whole truth.

Be that as it may, this is an opportunity for the Travellers to establish relations with another faction. If they do not handle the contact themselves, and have not met this faction before, they are passing up the chance for a well-handled first contact and the initial Faction Relations Indicator is reduced by –1 as the new faction thinks the Travellers are beholden to another power. If the Travellers insist on handling the contact themselves they will have all the usual first contact difficulties but at least they will be introduced on their own terms.

The Travellers may find their hosts oddly unreceptive to their offers of trade or beset by confusion about how to negotiate and who with. This will eventually lead to the conclusion that the diplomatic party is misrepresenting the situation. How the Travellers go about straightening this out is entirely up to them. They may be willing to allow the impression already made to stand, perhaps coming to an arrangement with the diplomatic party to act for them on favourable terms or they might make an open challenge. Whatever they do will have consequences; the Travellers may alienate the diplomatic party's faction if they are confrontational – and definitively if they are violent – but might not care about that if they feel their trust has been abused.

This is a potentially awkward situation but one that could be negotiated by clever Travellers. To do so they will have to enter the game of local politics, perhaps playing the factions off against one another. If nothing else, the misrepresentation of their allegiance could be seen as justification to favour a different faction or undermine the interests of their diplomats. A particularly clever strategy might be to give the new faction a favourable deal – but not too favourable – and make it clear the Travellers are offended by the deception. This would be taken as a broad hint that the diplomats' faction needs to make it up to the Travellers. What they can extort out of the situation depends on their diplomatic skills and how far they are willing to push their luck.



DEVASTATION

This mission marks a turning point in the Travellers' adventures in the NSY-S region and should be implemented only when the Referee feels it is time to move towards the adventure climax. The Travellers are approached by one of the factions with a straight request for help. One of their colonies seems to be out of contact. It may be nothing; just the vagaries of delayed starships but the last three scheduled vessels have not returned from their visits.

The faction wants *Deepnight Revelation* to check on the silent colony and, if possible, locate the missing starships. They may all be sitting on a landing pad somewhere waiting for a critical component, or delayed by some minor matter, but the first of them should have reached its home base six weeks ago and nothing has been heard of it. The faction would consider this a Major undertaking even if there turns out to be no serious problem and will be extremely grateful if the Travellers can rescue stranded crews or assist a colony with whatever has befallen it.

Speculation is rife about what might have happened but there is no way to know without visiting the colony. An attack by another faction is unlikely but possible; it would represent a huge escalation in a situation previously characterised by an occasional inconclusive exchange of fire between starships. Mutiny or rebellion are also possibilities but are not much more likely. It is hard to imagine what might have caused three separate starships to go missing but the Travellers may be able to unravel the mystery. They will receive whatever assistance they need so long as they can depart quickly.

The Referee should choose a suitable location for the incident. This may be one of the existing colonies or one added to the map for the purposes of this adventure. Ideally, it will be located towards or in the Gamma subsector of the region but this is not essential.

When the Travellers arrive it is obvious something is seriously wrong. There is a belt of debris around the mainworld whose composition corresponds to the owning faction's starships. The atmosphere contains far more dust and ash than would be expected, reminiscent of an enormous volcanic event or large-scale nuclear exchange. Little more can be determined from a distance but there are signals coming from the planet. These appear to be scattered distress calls.

Analysing the signals reveals little concrete information; they are for the most part automated beacons or signals sent out blindly from improvised transmitters in the hope a passing ship picks them up. Not all of the originators are still alive or able to respond. Those that can have little information and are more concerned with begging for help than answering questions.

As *Deepnight Revelation* approaches the mainworld, it becomes apparent it has suffered a major asteroid impact, sufficient to throw up a blanket of dust and debris around the planet. The world is now in the grip of a nuclear winter that is likely to persist for years. The point of impact was almost precisely in the centre of the most populated region; all the colony's cities and large settlements are gone. The only survivors are scattered across smaller communities distant from the impact point.

There are some immediate questions thrown up by this discovery. An asteroid likely to hit a populated world would surely have been tracked for years and some effort made to deflect it, or at least the faction's leaders would have known about the possibility of an impact. There is also no explanation for how the ships in orbit came to be destroyed. It is not possible to obtain any answers; *Deepnight Revelation* will have to approach the world and land a party to investigate.

CITADEL ATTACK

This colony had indeed been tracking an asteroid that might someday pose a hazard. As with many systems, there are a few rocks whose orbits pass close to the mainworld's projected position within the next decades. However, there was nothing on collision course and there seemed to be no threat for the foreseeable future.

That impression changed when it became apparent the asteroid was changing course. After checking and re-checking data, it was confirmed; the asteroid had engaged some sort of drive system. The colony's few scientists wondered if it might be a generation ship from some distant civilisation and attempted contact. When that failed the only starship at the world was sent to make a close approach. Its last transmission confirmed low-powered drive emissions, then reported coming under fire. The vessel was destroyed almost instantly.

The asteroid then launched a number of subordinate craft into orbit around the colony, which ambushed the

next two ships to arrive and destroyed them, too. Their limited weaponry was sufficient to eliminate some of the attackers but most remain operational, hiding in the debris belt. Meanwhile, the population could only wait helplessly as the asteroid aimed itself at their main population centre and plunged into the atmosphere. The majority of the population died in the fireball or the first hours after impact.

The attacker was a Citadel, arriving in an unexpectedly inhabited system with malfunctioning systems and failing programming. Unable to implement a proper blockade or investigate for signs of infestation, the Citadel obeyed its core directive – eliminate any possibility of infection by the Deepnight Entity. Little remains of the Citadel itself but its autonomous small craft will remain functional for years to come.

AMBUSH IN ORBIT

There is a considerable amount of debris in orbit – enough to account for a couple of starships of at least 800 tons each. Some of the fragments are fairly large, up to around 40–50 displacement tons, although most are much smaller. There are no detectable emissions from power or drive systems, or air and water leakage, suggesting that the critical spaces of these craft were utterly smashed with no chance of survivors.

Within the debris belt lurks a cluster of Citadel robots and about half of an attack craft equipped with a light mass driver array. This will open fire as soon as it is detected and at the same time the robots will accelerate towards any craft approaching the planet.

If the Travellers are complacent and fail to take suitable precautions they will be ambushed as they enter orbit; the Citadel's surviving units will achieve complete surprise. If they are more cautious they will have a chance to detect something suspicious amid the wreckage and may be able to react in time. Assuming the Travellers make a careful sensor sweep of the debris, looking for threats, they will detect suspicious movement early if a Difficult (10+) Electronics (sensors) check is made. A second check can be made at the last moment, at Routine (6+) difficulty.

The mass driver salvo is accompanied by a swarm of 2D+12 Mobile Units (see page 33) emerging from the debris at close range and attempting to land on the *Deepnight Revelation's* hull. If they are not stopped by point defence fire the Travellers may have to send armed parties out onto the hull to deal with them.

Complete Surprise: The first the Travellers know of the situation is a power spike at close range, followed by the

impact of a light mass driver array against *Deepnight Revelation* or a subordinate craft if one is nearer the debris. This hit is automatic; any that follow need to make a check to hit as normal. Meanwhile a mob of small robots accelerates towards the Travellers' vessel(s) and attempts to land on the hull. Point defence fire is less effective than usual in the time available; the intercept score is rolled using D3 instead of normal dice. Thus a Type 2 point-defence battery would intercept 2D3 robots instead of the usual 2D.

Late Detection: If the attack is detected at the last second, the Travellers have time to make an emergency evasive manoeuvre. If they do not do so, their ship is hit automatically by the light mass driver array. If they evade it makes an attack roll with DM+2. Point defence weapons may fire on the incoming robots but there is no time for other weapons to thin the swarm.

Early Detection: If the hostile unit is detected as it prepares to fire, the Travellers have a chance to scan it properly before it attacks. It will fire as soon as it thinks it has been detected, so a scan or evasive movement will trigger the attack. If this occurs soon after detection, the unit makes an attack roll as normal and point defence can engage the robots with full effectiveness. The swarm will reach the nearest of the Travellers' craft or *Deepnight Revelation* in 1D rounds. The swarm can be thinned by any weapons the Travellers can bring to bear, providing the 1D rolled for their rounds of engagement is less than or equal to the transit time of the swarm.

The Hostile Unit

The hostile is a self-contained autonomous attack craft armed with a light mass driver array and a small power plant. It is heavily damaged but still functional and will attack until destroyed. The unit resembles a small (50-ton displacement) planetoid with critical components buried deep inside and is extremely resilient. It is not constructed like a typical crewed planetoid hull ship, as there was no need. Instead, chambers were hollowed out for drives, power, command systems and the weapon, and the remainder of the rock left as armour. As a result, the hostile unit must be more or less blasted apart to destroy it.

The hostile unit is treated as having Armour: 12 and 50 Hull points. Its mass driver array is a clumsy but powerful weapon, requiring the planetoid to be more or less aligned with the target. It is incapable of tracking fast-moving craft at Short ranges or less but can deliver a potent sucker punch if it achieves an ambush position. Base chance to hit is Average (8+), with DM+2 if firing on an unsuspecting target at Close range. The weapon does 6D damage.



ON PLANET

The impact crater is very obvious and from the lack of fallout it is clear this was an asteroid impact. The impactor may have been around one kilometre in diameter, although much depends on its velocity and composition. The crater is almost 20 kilometres across and lies at the centre of a zone of total destruction covering the world's only major city and its surrounding communities. There are no survivors in this region. It is clear there have been significant climatic effects, although the world's ecosystem will survive.

A wider search will identify several communities in sheltered areas, which may have survivors. Some are actively transmitting and a proportion of those can respond. The Travellers may also be able to identify metallic objects on the ground near some of these communities, resembling large escape pods or orbital cargo delivery units. There is no response to signals from any of the communities that have these pods near them.

If the Travellers land at a community that has pods nearby, they will find a grim sight. There is extensive damage from the asteroid planetfall, which caused an earthquake and blast effects even in areas sheltered from the thermal radiation of the impact. Most buildings are structurally intact, although there have been fires from secondary causes and collapses in some areas. It appears the situation was survivable and there is evidence that some people did indeed begin trying to salvage the situation. However, there are no survivors.

The reason is evident after investigation. There are bodies of people killed by laser fire and remains of robotic combat units armed with such weapons. These are Mobile Units from the Citadel, although the

Travellers will not yet know that. It seems that not long after the impact, numerous combat robots touched down in orbital assault capsules and attacked survivors. They fought back as best they could and inflicted losses but the robots are for the most part still operational.

In some cases the robots have moved on towards other settlements but some have concealed themselves among the wreckage and will attempt to ambush the landing party. They attack without warning and once combat has been joined others will emerge from their hiding places. Depending on the Referee's preference, this might result in a series of encounters with single units or a larger assault by a group.

Settlements that do not have landing capsules near them will have survivors, who may be paranoid and even hostile. This is quite likely if they have never heard of the Travellers or *Deepnight Revelation* – their colony was bombed without warning, the survivors attacked and then previously unknown aliens began landing. The possibility for a lethal misunderstanding is considerable. If the Travellers can establish relations they can piece together the survivors' story.

The people of outlying communities were not scientists or well-informed important officials. Most were farmers or small town folk who only heard rumours or news reports. All remember vividly where they were when the chilling news was announced that an asteroid expected to pass close to their world had changed direction and was accelerating on a collision course. Some actually saw the fireball and all experienced the shocks and earthquakes. Further objects falling from the sky were expected to be asteroid fragments but turned out to be robotic kill squads.

If these events are taking place at an Erline world the locals will know folk tales about the Citadels and the fall of their ancient civilisation. The Tenipal will not and folk from the Sovereigndoms are also unlikely to know the stories. However, both are aware that something happened to the Erline in the distant past and they have had several weeks to fearfully speculate about what might be happening.

Any group the Travellers manage to contact without being mistaken for enemies will be desperate for help and it is quite likely they will become involved in a relief effort. There are many survivor communities scattered over a wide area, making the situation complex even if it is possible to predict which communities are viable and which have killer robots hiding in the wreckage.

The Travellers may be able to salvage a considerable amount of supplies and equipment from devastated settlements, although always at some risk. Coupled with their own considerable resources, this gives them the capability to undertake a major rescue effort and save a great many lives. The colony's parent faction will consider a major relief effort to be an Impressive deed and even less determined efforts would be well received.

In the meantime it may be possible to learn a lot from the robots. Their similarities to those used by the Erline Worlds may cause some confusion and might even lead to incorrect conclusions that increase tensions in the region. A detailed analysis, providing there are current Erline technologies available for comparison, will eventually demonstrate that these robots are of a different origin.

There is little that can be learned from the crater but the debris in orbit includes the remains of a couple of planetoid mass driver carriers. Again, these are obviously different from any known local technology but their origins are likely to remain a mystery for now. What the Travellers can learn is that whoever ruthlessly destroyed this colony likes to use asteroids as ships and apparently prefers to work through remotely controlled craft and robotic soldiers. This is similar to the approach of the Erline Worlds but the technologies in use are slightly different. There are no signs of any biological creatures, nor room for them aboard the surviving craft.

There are many opportunities for drama and roleplaying during the investigation and relief effort. Indeed, in a campaign with smaller scope it would be possible to fill an entire adventure with just this one incident. However, given the scope of the overall campaign the Referee must strike a balance between effectively portraying the devastation wrought by the Citadel – also giving the Travellers a chance to investigate and do

whatever takes their fancy – and keeping the overall campaign moving towards its goal. Thus many of the investigative expeditions and disaster relief projects can be abstracted using CEI or CEI checks.

AFTERMATH

At some point the Travellers are going to have to carry word of the attack to one or another of the factions. It is possible that other ships may arrive at the destroyed colony, which has the potential for misunderstanding. This is especially true if the Travellers have not met that faction – finding a powerful alien vessel in orbit over a shattered world might prompt some ship captains to leap to the wrong conclusion.

Once any misunderstandings are cleared up the Travellers can present what they know to any factions they choose. The Erline Worlds will instantly recognise what has happened and the Sovereigndoms might, however neither is certain to reveal the truth. They may try to bargain for information or blame someone else if it suits their purposes. The faction that was attacked may not be receptive to the idea that an unknown power has wiped out a more or less defenceless colony.

The end result is that tensions in the region are enormously increased with the possibility of serious incidents. Some that happen are harmless but demonstrate a worrying level of ineptitude as 'suspicious' asteroids are attacked or landed on by heavily armed reconnaissance parties. Meanwhile all factions begin a scramble to produce rock-busting weapons and bombard the Travellers with requests for weaponry that can defeat this new threat. Refusal to provide something the factions think the Travellers have – even if they are wildly wrong – could harm relations.

Meanwhile, the Travellers also receive requests to check on colonies and chart planetoids. The factions are working themselves up into a panic and seeking solutions where there might not actually be problems. It should be obvious to the Travellers that there is a potential threat from whoever attacked the colony but a significantly greater chance that the incident will trigger conflict. It is possible they might be blamed for the attacks; rumours keep surfacing that they are somehow to blame and some leaders are calling for the Travellers to be held to account or forced to provide a greater level of assistance. The region has just become a lot more hazardous and even if the Travellers are not inclined to help the locals their own self-interest may force them to get involved. If they do not obtain concrete answers about the attack and who is behind it they might be drawn into a regional conflict as the common enemy of all three factions.

GUNBOAT DIPLOMACY

Once the colony attack has taken place, events begin to accelerate in the NSY-S region. Tensions between the Sovereigndoms are particularly high and there are rumours about warning shots or even exchanges of fire between individual vessels on distant stations. Some of these rumours do not bear scrutiny – the locations are too distant for reports to have arrived yet or are places where an encounter is highly unlikely.

However, there are indications that the region is lurching towards conflict. The Tenipal Alliance has sent ships to its colony at Claimed-in-Hope (0706 NSY-S Alpha) in response to a similar move by the Sovereigndoms. This is a difficult undertaking for both sides, requiring a lengthy transit and deep space refuelling to reach the target system. At present there is an armed standoff in the system and it seems to be only a matter of time before the situation deteriorates.

Wherever the Travellers happen to be, they are approached by a representative of the Erline Worlds. This might be the captain of a starship that is encountered – perhaps deliberately sent to find them – or an ambassador. Either way, the request is the same. It is not in the interests of the Erline Worlds or anyone else for the Tenipal Alliance and Sovereigndoms to go to war. The Erline Worlds therefore requests that the Travellers act as mediators or peacekeepers.

The Travellers may be suspicious of this request. They are right to be, although not necessarily for the correct reasons. The Erline are aware of an increasing threat from the Citadels and hope to recruit either or both of the other factions to an alliance. They are unwilling to discuss the Citadels or reveal their knowledge of them as yet, so will attempt to portray their interest in the conflict as based on a different kind of self-interest. They will claim, not without some basis in truth, that they want better relations with the Tenipal and to improve the stability of the region as a whole. This will have significant economic benefits for all concerned but especially for the most advanced culture in the region.

This is a good pitch, since it admits enough self-interest to be plausible and represents a worthwhile long-term goal. Indeed, if the region remains stable for long enough the Tenipal Worlds are highly likely to emerge as the clear dominant power. At present, trade is patchy and carried out over long distances but as trade

bases and additional colonies are developed the most technologically advanced culture in the area will exert increasing economic influence over the others.

If the Travellers have learned a little about the Sovereigndoms, and the overall political situation in the region, they may think to question the Erline motives. They have a history of conflict, albeit none of it very serious, with the Tenipal and a greater affinity with the Sovereigndoms. The Erline will cite internal politics within the Sovereigndoms and the difficulty of dealing with some of the overlords – which the Travellers may have experienced for themselves – as a reason to oppose an increase in power.

All this is plausible, for the very good reason it is true, but it is not the whole story. If the Travellers absolutely refuse to help without a candid explanation of the Erline Worlds' motives their ambassador is authorised to disclose the existence and origins of the Citadels. All of the above is true but in addition the Erline wish to forge an alliance to locate and destroy the Citadels and render the region safe – at least from that particular threat.

It may be that the Travellers have already made it plain they want to cross the Great Rift or they may have taken actions and asked questions that lead to that conclusion. If so, the Tenipal Worlds are willing to offer the Travellers assistance in doing so. This will take the form of data on systems along the rift fringe and support from resupply vessels as *Deepnight Revelation* scans for a suitable deep space refuelling point.

If the Erline Worlds have been forced to disclose the existence of the Citadels they will put all their cards on the table. They want the Travellers' assistance in forging an alliance to search for and destroy the Citadels and, in return, will construct a deep space refuelling cache for the Travellers to use in their crossing. This is no small thing, as it ties up a lot of Erline ships and will inevitably lead to some of them being lost. If the Erline have not had to reveal too much about the Citadels they will not offer this just yet but will still agree to provide support whilst the Travellers search for a crossing point.

As to the situation at Claimed-in-Hope, the Erline Worlds wants the Travellers to first and foremost ensure that a war does not break out over the disputed colony. Ideally, they will manage to broker a solution whereby both the Tenipal and the Sovereigndoms are satisfied. This is the

outcome most likely to create lasting cooperation. The Travellers may be daunted by the task at hand but are assured a diplomatic mission is already on its way from the Erline Worlds. All they have to do is prevent the other factions from shooting at one another until the diplomats arrive then hand over the complex negotiations. If they can create an honourable agreement in the meantime the Erline Worlds will respect it, as just stopping things from getting any worse will do for now.

STANDOFF

Both the Tenipal Alliance and the Sovereigndoms have sent armed vessels to Claimed-in-Hope. The Tenipal have sent two 2,000-ton naval ships, representing a significant force for the Alliance, whilst the Sovereigndoms have deployed three 900-ton vessels. It is significant that each of these ships is owned by a different overlord, suggesting that the Sovereigndoms – or at least some of them – are in alignment on this issue.

Neither side wants a shooting war but the rhetoric flying back and forth might imply otherwise. The Sovereigndoms repeatedly denounce the colony as an intrusion into their sphere of influence and a potential forward base for a sneak attack against their nearest worlds. The Tenipal are not receptive to these allegations and are not being diplomatic about their dismissals. This is not surprising really, as this sort of accusation is thrown around on a regular basis and has become wearisome.

Meanwhile, ships from both factions keep approaching one another or setting up attack positions, trying to force the opposing captain to change position or back down. Each petty 'victory' is trumpeted in the next set of declarations and demands, forcing a counter-move by another ship. The brinksmanship is escalating but as yet neither side has a clear advantage in firepower so deliberate commencement of hostilities remains unlikely. An accidental exchange of fire is almost inevitable, however.

The arrival of *Deepnight Revelation* produces a flurry of demands, requests and 'offers of information' from both factions, all of which are heavily biased. The Travellers are requested by both sides to 'mediate' the dispute but clearly the factions want a decision in their favour. In addition to stating the obvious righteousness of their position, incentives might be offered by both sides during the standoff as well. However, it is likely the whole matter will be overtaken by events.

Tenipal Alliance Delegation

The Tenipal request permission to send a delegation aboard *Deepnight Revelation* to put forward their position. This will be a low-key affair, with a handful of

representatives and their staff. The delegation is led by an official from the colony on Claimed-in-Hope, who clearly has no experience of diplomacy and little of negotiation.

The Tenipal delegate's title/name translates as Who-Speaks-For-Claimed-in-Hope, with some additional syllables from her personal name. The first of these sound like Tenzan to Anglic speakers and she is happy enough to be addressed in this manner. The Tenipal delegation might at some point ask for a translation of the Anglic name, thinking it is a title or honorific in that language. This sort of minor misunderstanding characterises the whole exchange, which is rather ineptly handled on the part of the Tenipal.

In fact, Tenzan has been appointed because the colonists admire her integrity and willingness to slog through difficult issues on their behalf rather than for any real or presumed competence in the field. She is well respected and has earned this honourably; Tenzan will do her very best for her people but her best is not all that good. Indeed, the case she presents to the Travellers comes down to nothing more than this. 'the Sovereigndoms are greedy, grasping and untrustworthy. You should ignore what they tell you. Claimed-in-Hope is our home and that means we own the whole star system because we have been living here for years now.'

This is not a very good pitch, although it might strike a chord with the Travellers. Whole-system jurisdiction is a very neat-and-tidy concept, whereas having multiple powers in the same system or on the same world can get highly complex. Tenzan's 'diplomatic' arguments are almost petulant in tone, coming down to 'but it's ours' in most cases. The claim to the whole system is typical of the Tenipal Alliance, who have a habit of just assuming a star system or planet is theirs because it is nearby even if they have not gone to the trouble of making a declaration or establishing some sort of legal basis for a claim.

The Referee should play the Tenipal delegation as inept but well-meaning, basing their arguments on a sense of entitlement and annoyance at the pushy Sovereigndoms. Their claim to the system is very weak and has no legal basis in the usual sense – in Charted Space a territorial claim would normally require on a demonstrable ability to enforce it and be based on a credible claim established by physical presence. An outpost or even a beacon in orbit might be considered sufficient to lay claim to an unimportant rockball but the Tenipal Alliance has not established either. They have a solid claim to the part of Claimed-in-Hope they live on and a weaker one to the whole planet. An Imperial court would usually throw out a claim to the rest of the system based solely on proximity. Of course, this is not Charted Space and the Travellers can make whatever decisions they like.

Sovereigndoms Delegation

It is notable that none of the sovereigns are present in person but any of their captains is likely to act as if he is a planetary overlord... at the very least. Where the Tenipal request to send a delegation, the Sovereigndoms simply declare that one is en route to *Deepnight Revelation*. The Travellers could, of course, refuse to allow it to dock but this would create a diplomatic incident that might inflame the situation. If the Travellers are not inclined to be railroaded by the Sovereigndoms this way there will be a storm of protests about bias and an increase in provocative actions. The Sovereigndom ships might even start trying to harass *Deepnight Revelation* and her subordinate craft. This is particularly likely if they do not appreciate how powerful the Travellers and their ship actually are.

A delegation, if and when one is received, arrives with tremendous ceremony complete with a band and honour guards. The delegates will draw out the formalities and insist on all sorts of fiddly details, all of which are designed to make the Travellers wait or carry out actions that demonstrate the importance and superiority of the Sovereigndoms. Attempting to chivvy things along in a diplomatic manner is a difficult business; the Sovereigndoms are used to this and see it as a sign of weakness.

If the Travellers can make a Very Difficult (12+) Diplomat check they can play the Sovereigndoms delegation at their own game and win. This will make them a lot more respectful and less inclined to take liberties just to demonstrate their power. Ironically perhaps, a blunt and curt demand to stop messing everyone about is in this case a better option. The delegation does not really know how powerful the Travellers are but their technological advantage is obvious. Whilst the Sovereigndoms habitually strut their stuff to give an impression of power, their delegates are not willing to push their luck too far. Someone with a ship as powerful as *Deepnight Revelation*, who is willing to cut through the whole palaver with an instruction to just get down to business, might require a less brash approach. If the Travellers do shut the delegation down they will resent the loss of face but will develop some respect. The Travellers will gain DM+1 on all diplomatic efforts towards the Sovereigndoms during interactions with this delegation.

The Sovereigndoms delegation's pitch is a mix of implied threat and sensibly established precedent. Their internal politics have provided innumerable opportunities to practice this sort of negotiation and as a result their presentation is slick and covers the obvious requirements. They were not expecting to enter into a

diplomatic wrangle just yet but naturally their leaders on site are absolutely sure they can handle the situation and will plunge into it with gusto.

The Sovereigndoms are represented by a ship captain whose title, currently at least, is Righteous-Claim-Champion. The nearest the Travellers are likely to get to this sound is Ch'tzaik. He has already browbeaten his fellow captains for the right to lead the delegation and is thoroughly enjoying the opportunity to lord it over everyone concerned.

The Sovereigndoms position, according to Ch'tzaik, is that they have every right to place a colony in the system or even on Claimed-in-Hope itself, as the Tenipal Alliance cannot claim to need or be using the entire planet. Indeed the Sovereigndoms have displayed great forbearance in the matter of this colony, since they have a formal claim to the system dating back over a century. Naturally, Ch'tzaik has electronic copies of documents to 'prove' this. These documents were never lodged with any other power, since the Sovereigndoms do not answer to outsiders, but they were shared among the Sovereigndoms as all routine legal documents are. Naturally, the two other ship captains can also produce copies of the documents and will swear upon their honour that they are entirely genuine.

The Sovereigndoms can also demonstrate that they have landed on several bodies in the system and placed beacons denoting ownership. This is true and verifiable; Ch'tzaik dramatically orders the beacons to be activated and as the signal sweeps across the system orbital and surface beacons begin to transmit. These may have been placed during the survey missions known to have been carried out but could equally have been discreetly planted during the current dispute. Ch'tzaik follows this dramatic revelation up with a rather spurious argument that since the Sovereigndoms clearly own much of the planetary real estate in the system their claim to the rest of it is proven.

Negotiations Begin

Neither faction has a particularly strong case. The Tenipal claim is based on current possession, which is fair enough, but the existence of a small colony does not really justify excluding another power from colonising a different part of the planet, let alone the star system. The Sovereigndoms documentation is clearly bogus, having been mocked up in half an hour aboard one of their ships, but openly stating this might trigger hostility. Their claim based upon beacons and survey parties is rather more solid but at present they have no actual population on any of the worlds.



There is no right or wrong answer the Travellers can give to the dispute and none that will be accepted by both sides. The only possible courses of action are to negotiate or issue a decree and back it up with *Deepnight Revelation's* weapons. However, before anything can be settled a complication arises. Another ship emerges from jump and immediately begins accelerating towards Claimed-in-Hope. It is a colony vessel, jammed full of bewildered citizens rounded up and sent off without any training to create a population-based claim.

The colony ship has one purpose; to get its cargo of 20,000 Sovereigndoms citizens onto the surface of Claimed-in-Hope somewhere they can survive. They are equipped with basic tools and quite a lot of weapons, although few have any idea how to use them properly. They were stuffed into low berths for the trip and woken in the last hours of the final jump. Most do not even know how to erect the tents and prefabricated shelters they have been given. Their mission is a rather callous one; to survive long enough to create a territorial claim and get into enough trouble to justify further support and security missions.

The Tenipal delegation denounces the arrival of the new ship as an invasion, whereas the Sovereigndoms delegation at first seems baffled. After an exchange of signals they announce that this is a colonisation mission that has been planned since well before the Tenipal illegally seized the world they call Claimed-in-Hope. Everyone knew about this plan; the Tenipal

are just pretending ignorance. As the Tenipal ships begin laboriously moving to intercept the new arrival, the Sovereigndom vessels issue threats and begin to reposition. Both sides demand the Travellers help them.

The Travellers need to do something. If the Sovereigndom mission reaches the planet it will establish a presence that will be impossible to remove without military action. The colony ship is unarmed and defenceless, and firing on it will start a war. Whether or not the Tenipal are willing to do so is as yet unclear but they are certainly willing to fire warning shots and attempt to physically block its approach.

If the Travellers do not act, the colony ship ignores all warning shots and demands to halt and enters orbit. Tenipal ships attempt to get in its way and force it to sheer off to avoid a collision. They are not manoeuvrable enough to manage this but a close approach is too much for a Sovereigndoms captain who opens fire on the Tenipal ship. This is not an attempt at destruction but a final warning in the form of hull damage. If the Travellers have not already taken action, this is their last chance.

The Sovereigndoms and Tenipal ships begin a half-hearted and ineffectual skirmish in orbit and if the delegations are not separated aboard *Deepnight Revelation*, they will start fighting too. It all looks extremely inept but astute Travellers may notice that neither side is trying too hard to cause damage. The whole affair resembles two people who have somehow got into a fight neither wants and are trying to prevent

escalation without backing down. The exchanges of fire are the equivalent of stinging slaps rather than knockout punches, interspersed with apparently aggressive manoeuvring that somehow prevents either side from delivering effective fire. Meanwhile, the colony ship makes a hard landing in a remote area of temperate grassland and begins disgorging confused and unprepared colonists.

The situation is farcical in many ways. Combat between the delegations is mostly hand-to-hand brawling, with combatants allowing their weapons (if they have any) to be knocked out of their hands. The only serious wounds are caused by ricochets from shots not really intended to hit anyone. The few who seem to want to get stuck in and cause damage are impeded by their own side as often as not. However, escalation is inevitable at this point.

Sooner or later someone gets a clean shot or stabs an opponent with a dress-dagger. After a stunned moment the mood changes and all hell breaks loose. The delegations will fight each other in earnest now and may turn on any *Deepnight Revelation* crew who try to stop them. It is even possible that both factions will gang up on security personnel trying to take away their weapons.

At the same time, the space battle finally turns nasty. Full salvos are turned on enemy ships, although even then a crippled vessel will be permitted to surrender or limp away. Both sides are still willing to stop fighting; they just do not know how. If they can be separated or somehow convinced to cease fire the situation might yet be brought under control. The Travellers will have to make a dramatic gesture and some serious-sounding threats but they can prevent all-out war. Both sides will be secretly grateful for this, although they will also be annoyed at what they see as denial of their chance to win a battle and gain an advantage over the opposition.

ENTER THE ERLINE

At this juncture, or at the height of the battle if the Travellers fail to prevent it, the Erline Worlds' diplomatic ship emerges from jump. It is more or less out of control and suffering from crippling damage. Both factions immediately accuse the other of firing on the Erline ship but it is clear this is not the case. It is broadcasting a distress signal whose content is... unusual. According to the garbled transmission the ship is under attack from within. The connotations are of mutiny but the translation is not quite right. It makes reference to 'the traditional enemy' and requests help before the ship is overrun.

The vessel is a standard Erline Worlds general-service starship, carrying a diplomatic party to mediate. However, as it refuelled in NSY-S Alpha 0607 it

encountered craft from a Citadel. The diplomatic vessel escaped with some damage, not suspecting that a swarm of Mobile Units had landed on its hull. Some were destroyed when the ship entered jump but the remainder were eventually able to get inside. A running fight has been raging for the past 10 hours aboard the ship and the crew are losing.

The vessel carries full files on the Citadels – as much as the Erline Worlds knows for sure, anyway. It also has data on the Citadel encountered in the Alpha 0607 system. This is offered, to be delivered just as soon as the Erline are rescued from their current predicament. Soon after broadcasting their distress call the Erline crew goes off the air. Their ship ceases manoeuvring but apparently still has power. There are some weak signals here and there, which might be vacc-suited crewmembers trying to make contact.

The Travellers will need to send a boarding party across to the Erline ship, assuming they do not simply blast it into atoms. Within the hull are pockets of survivors; some holding out for the time being in secured areas and some moving around the ship in a constant game of cat-and-mouse with the Mobile Units.

Gaining Entry

Docking with the ship is not a problem. It is not manoeuvring or resisting in any way. However, any craft that comes close runs the risk of a Mobile Unit getting aboard. The two hangar areas offer a relatively easy way into the hull but their doors are closed and do not respond to any known commands. The Travellers will have to cut or blast a way in if they want to dock a shuttle internally. Personnel could make a hull-to-hull transfer by jumping across. This might meet opposition from Mobile Units stationed on the hull or lurking in ambush in chambers they have cut an access point to.

Bridge and Command Area

The bridge and its associated chambers are a total loss. There are Erline bodies and wrecked Mobile Units scattered throughout the area, with heavy damage from weapons and secondary fires. It might be possible to extract data from the computer cores in this area but this would be a lengthy undertaking and will at best produce fragmentary information. There may be Mobile Units or survivors in the area, prowling about in search of one another.

Missile Bay

The missile bay is one of the most resilient sections of the ship. A small group of survivors has taken refuge here and have managed to collect some wounded. They are paranoid and desperate, which might lead

to shooting at mere movements rather than checking targets. However, if contact can be made they will be highly receptive to the idea of getting off the ship. Moving the wounded might be a challenge, however; some are in critical condition and have been given only basic treatment. The Travellers will need to stabilise the casualties, whose physiology may be unfamiliar, then defend them during the move to a rescue vessel.

Plasma Cannon Bay

The plasma cannon bay is empty when the Travellers first arrive, having been cleared of defenders by Mobile Units that then moved on. Now that additional craft are in proximity, some of the Mobile Units are beginning to move back towards the plasma weapon, intending to take control of it and attack the Travellers' small craft or even *Deepnight Revelation* herself. It will take them some time to gain control of the weapon but it is based on ancient Erline principles and operable by the Citadels. The Travellers may encounter Mobile Units moving purposefully towards the front of this cylinder and figure out what is going on. If they can eliminate the Mobile Units in the control chamber before they get control of the weapon they can prevent firing. If not, the weapon will be operated by any remaining Mobile Units unless the Travellers can interrupt the control signal – perhaps by electronic jamming – or physically disable the cannon.

Drive Chambers

The drive chambers were thoroughly shot up before the fighting moved on elsewhere. It may be possible to find survivors, casualties or damaged Mobile Units in awkward corners of the chambers. The drives are repairable with great effort but for now the controls are so badly smashed up by gunfire that it is not possible to manoeuvre the ship.

Central Hull

The central hull contains mostly accommodation and general support systems, although there is an intact computer core that contains backups of the main system's databases. The central area is a battle zone, with Mobile Units and crewmembers hunting one another or hiding from the hunters. Anyone wanting to move around the ship has to pass through this area at some point. There have been multiple ambushes at key points, some of which have become mini war zones as one side or the other seeks to gain unfettered access to the rest of the ship.

Tactics

The Mobile Units were put aboard to disable the ship, with a secondary mission to obtain data and, if possible, move on to other vessels. They will

engage any organic beings they meet, without much imagination. They are capable of basic tactics such as observing patterns of movement and setting up an ambush or controlling key parts of the ship, although beyond this their combat style is mostly based on firepower and being able to take hits.

The survivors just want to get off the ship alive. Most are willing to fight in order to evacuate their comrades but these are not warriors or soldiers. If the Travellers can convince them the battle can be won, some of the Erline will put up a good fight. However, their instinct is to hole up in a defensible location and wait for assistance rather than go looking for the enemy. The few that have turned hunter are exceptions to this rule and can show the others how to go about stalking and killing their mechanical enemies.

OUTCOMES

The expected narrative of this adventure presupposes the Travellers want to stop the battle over Claimed-in-Hope, although whether out of altruism or self-interest is an open question. Even once the factions are fighting in earnest, they are rather ineffectual and amateurish. The arrival of the distressed Erline ship will cause consternation on both sides, since neither can afford to assume she has not come to join the other cause. This is another chance for the Travellers to halt the fighting and since both sides want to step back from the conflict all they need is a reason and assurances that their ships can break off safely.

The Travellers should be able to broker a truce or force one on the combatants. Convincing either faction to assist in the rescue of the Erline ship will be more tricky and getting both involved is as risky as it is difficult. More likely, the damaged ships of the Sovereigns and the Tenipal Alliance will agree to move apart and make repairs but little more. There are some serious issues to be resolved here but the arrival of the Erline has provided both a challenge and an opportunity.

If the Travellers can rescue the Erline crew or help them regain control of their ship they will give access to the vessel's central data cores. There are no state secrets there but full data on the Citadels is available along with information on sightings and incidents to date. Among this data is something of interest to all factions at Claimed-in-Hope; the Citadel encountered at Alpha 0607 is headed for this system. It will be years before it arrives but if action is not taken it will destroy the colonies here regardless of who owns them.

RESOLUTIONS

Assuming the Travellers saved some of the Erline diplomatic ship's personnel, they will be only too glad to share what they know about the Citadels. If the ship was destroyed, the Referee will need to find another way to confer this information to the Travellers and their potential allies. Perhaps there is an Erline representative already at the colony or aboard *Deepnight Revelation*. Data recovered from the ship's computer will also provide the answers, although without any explanation.

What the Travellers (and the other factions, if they choose to reveal what they have discovered) now know is that the ancient Erline civilisation built a robotic asteroid base to protect its worlds. This base was programmed to gather resources and build additional assets and must have malfunctioned in some manner. The modern Erline do not know about the Deepnight Entity and will be as alarmed as anyone else to learn of its existence. It is possible the Travellers will make the connection between the behaviour of the Citadels and the possibility of an infestation at some point. If not, the Mission Division scientists can provide the explanation. However, there is no need to spoon-feed the Travellers a full rundown of all the reasons for everything. If they have to earn knowledge their curiosity will drive them to further adventures.

Be that as it may, the situation at Claimed-in-Hope is difficult. Shots have been fired, there are probably Sovereigndom colonists struggling to set up their shelters planetside and now there is a Citadel heading for the system at a modest sublight speed. It will not be in range to attack for a generation at least but it is liable to try to wipe out the colony when it arrives. There is also the possibility that other Citadels could be coasting across the region seeking inhabited worlds to exterminate.

The Travellers need to establish two courses of action: what to do about the colony at Claimed-in-Hope and how to deal with the Citadel threat. They can always ignore both, of course. There is nothing to stop the Travellers from simply boarding their high-tech ship and leaving the races of the NSY-S region to sort out their own problems. Some among the crew would be quite happy with this; others would vigorously oppose it on moral grounds. In between is a position of enlightened

self-interest – helping the locals puts them in a position where they are able, and hopefully willing, to assist the Travellers in moving onward.

If the Travellers decide to resolve these issues they will have to host another round of negotiations. This time they may have assistance from the Erline, who have a better understanding of both cultures but also brought their own agenda to the table and, of course, there is the nebulous threat of the Citadels. At this point it is not clear what criteria are used to decide whether to devastate an inhabited world or protect it.

THE COLONIAL QUESTION

With Sovereigndoms colonists on the ground, something needs to be decided. Unless they are to be removed – perhaps forcibly – they will almost immediately need assistance. They are city folk who have been used as pawns by their overlord, sent to cement a landgrab with no regard to how many die during the first night. Even in a mild, temperate region these inexperienced and disorganised colonists will suffer accidents or casualties from exposure. Disease is almost inevitable within a few days or weeks.

There is no easy or simple solution here and attempting to do the obvious 'right thing' (whatever the Travellers think that is) will not adequately resolve the situation. The simplest solution is for the colonists to be forcibly removed and sent home but that is not easy to accomplish and might trigger a second round of shooting. Granting them the land they occupy will displease the existing Tenipal colonists almost as much and might trigger a removal attempt.

One possible solution is to grant the Sovereigndoms colonists the region they occupy, an otherwise uninhabited continent, as an autonomous part of Claimed-in-Hope. The new colony will receive support from the existing Tenipal one and the Travellers will have to contribute to the initial setup as well, since Claimed-in-Hope simply does not have the resources to support newcomers. As an autonomous region, the colony will not provide its sponsor with a claim to the planet or rest of the system. This will not sit well with the Sovereigndoms, but they can be bargained or coerced into accepting the situation.



The implied threat of the Travellers' powerful ship might cow the Sovereigndoms for now but unless the Travellers are willing to spend years playing peacekeeper they will have to find another inducement. Bribery (with technology, assistance or items) might convince a sovereign to sign a treaty but there is no certainty it will be honoured when the Travellers leave. The Tenipal are entirely sure it will not. The threat of the Citadels and necessity of a defensive alliance might work but the best option might be the Erline Worlds.

The Erline Worlds are capable of enforcing a treaty upon the Sovereigndoms but are generally better disposed to their kin than the sovereigns really deserve. Normally, the Erline would side with the Sovereigndoms but are deeply worried about the Citadels and want an alliance against them. They might well agree to enforce a treaty in return for assistance and are far more likely to honour a deal in the long term than the Sovereigndoms.

For their part, the Tenipal are uncomfortable with the idea of having a foreign colony, especially one in which there are Tenipal living as second-class citizens, on their doorstep. Selling them the idea of letting the colonists stay will be difficult; getting them to actively assist the new arrivals even more so. Assurances that the deal negates a landgrab will be met with derisive laughter; the Tenipal have long experience of attempting to deal honourably with the Sovereigndoms.

A deal can be brokered, or forced upon all concerns, by careful diplomacy and 'solving' the three-way politics of the region. The Citadel threat is most real to the Erline Worlds, who are the most powerful of the factions. This is the key to a lasting agreement; one that could change the nature of the region over time. The negotiations are an opportunity for roleplaying or could be abstracted if the Travellers are not so inclined. Likewise, the assistance or removal of the Sovereigndoms colonists is an opportunity to get hands-on and have adventures if the Travellers desire.

The plight of the colonists is desperate and sad. Their ship landed hard and was never intended to be a home, so they are forced to create a shanty town out of inadequate shelters and improvised materials. It is clear they have no idea how to use the little machinery they were assigned and medical facilities for the injured are extremely basic. The improvised camp has already become lawless and dangerous, with frightened colonists banding together to take what they need from others.

There are many ways the Travellers can help here. Establishing order and ensuring assistance gets to the right people would be an excellent start; at present trying to hand out food and equipment is a dangerous occupation. Aid workers are liable to be attacked and robbed, and anyone given something becomes a target. The majority are just desperate and will respond well

once they know they are going to be cared for, fed and protected. There are some criminal elements who have already done things they know will be punished and they have less incentive to start playing by the rules. The Travellers could end up playing judge and jury as well as medic, engineer and aid distributor.

If the colonial question is settled in a manner acceptable to all three factions, the situation on Claimed-in-Hope will not be an obstacle to a wider alliance. To achieve this, the Travellers need to get the Sovereigndoms to agree that they have no territorial claim to the planet itself and ideally to withdraw their claim to bodies in the rest of the system. Persuading the Sovereigndoms to essentially declare the system to be the territory of the Tenipal Alliance after so much dispute will not be easy, although the sovereigns are nothing if not pragmatic. They might be willing to accept a 'purchase agreement' whereby their 'legitimate' claims are bought out in a profitable deal. So long as they can spin the arrangement in a way that makes them seem to have come out ahead, they are likely to accept the situation rather than fighting for something of little current value.

The Sovereigndoms settlers on Claimed-in-Hope need to be honourably treated for this to work. Setting up an autonomous region with the support of the current colonists would satisfy that need, as would a resettlement paid for by the Tenipal or the Travellers. If the colony is allowed to remain there are potential benefits in terms of trade and cultural interchange that might reduce tensions... but on the other hand the Travellers have just created a handy place for the Sovereigndoms to ship dissidents off to and let them be the problem of the Tenipal Alliance. The future of this colony is beyond the scope of the adventure but if well managed at the start the prospects are positive.

THE CITADEL QUESTION

The second question to be resolved is that of the Citadels. Opinions vary as to how much of a threat they really are. At present there is no clear data on how many Citadels exist nor whether they automatically attack all worlds and ships they encounter. Their slow progress across the region should make it possible to locate and chart them, providing decades of warning. However, even if the possibility of an attack is low the effects are devastating.

The representatives of all three factions are receptive to the idea of joint action against the Citadels, albeit for slightly different reasons. Whether their home

governments will support an operation or a long-term alliance is an open question but it should be possible to create a framework for joint action when necessary. Each faction has reasons to mistrust the others but can be convinced the Citadels are a threat to everyone.

The Tenipal Alliance feels the least threatened by the Citadels but wants a lasting solution to the question of Claimed-in-Hope. The Sovereigndoms actually want the same thing, since their posturing almost dragged them into a war they were unprepared for. They will not admit this, of course, and will bluster a lot as is their wont, but both can be convinced if the Erline Worlds offer guarantees.

As to the Erline Worlds, they very much want this alliance and will make concessions to get it. Not only do they stand to remove the threat but hope to learn about their old civilisation and what happened to it. The Erline have never found their original homeworld and would dearly like to know where all its colonies were located. Some may have survived and even if not their fate should be recorded. It may be that the nearby Citadel contains information that could lead to the old homeworld and thereby unravelling secrets of Erline civilisation.

The Erline Worlds are willing to pledge to share information and technology gained from the Citadels and provide any knowledge necessary to unlock it. They will also agree, if the subject is brought up, that the presence of a collapsed Erline colony from long ago does not in and of itself create a territorial claim to that world or system. In return, the Erline Worlds want an agreement to share all information on the Citadels and methods of combating them and for each faction to provide ships and personnel for an attack on the one headed for Claimed-in-Hope. Although the Erline Worlds are the only faction that does not really need to worry about this Citadel – it is headed away from their territory – they wish to seize the opportunity to disable it and learn its secrets.

An alliance against the Citadels is in the interests of all three factions and cooperation against a common foe might be the basis of better relations in the future. The main obstacle is mutual mistrust and if the Travellers can convince the factions to overcome this they might just develop a habit of cooperation. This might be the beginning of an interstellar alliance that someday dominates a huge area but, for now, avoiding destruction at the hands of the Citadels will have to suffice. If one or even two factions refuse to join an alliance, the Erline Worlds will still urge the Travellers to help them and the others may come around later.

C H A P T E R S I X T E E N

STORMING THE CITADEL

The Citadel encountered at Alpha 0607 is passing through the periphery of the system at around 8% the speed of light. An intercept will require jumping to a point on the Citadel's path with the correct velocity to undertake combat or boarding. This means accelerating before entering jump. Since Alpha 0607 is two parsecs from Claimed-in-Hope, Sovereigndoms and Tenipal Alliance ships will require refuelling to get home afterwards, which would necessitate other vessels attaining this velocity to deliver fuel.

For a 1g ship it will take almost four weeks to accelerate to target velocity, although this can be trimmed a little by using a gravitational slingshot manoeuvre. Investigation of these possibilities strongly suggests that it is not practicable to use local ships for the operation but the Referee should ensure the Travellers are made aware of the possibility to use a slingshot manoeuvre to increase their own acceleration. Not only will this make the intercept easier for *Deepnight Revelation*, it may be useful later in the campaign...

PREPARATIONS

The Erline know only a little about the internal structure of the Citadel. Its critical systems are deep within the rock and it has sufficient mass that even nuclear explosions on its surface will be ineffective. A successful operation will require the neutralisation of surface weapons, followed by entry into the interior. There, it should be possible to shut down electronic systems or even gain access to them to retrieve data. Disabling the drives, power plant or computer cores should put the Citadel out of action. Failing that, a sufficiently large explosion at a weak point might crack the planetoid.

All of these plans require a boarding action against a planetoid fortress with unknown defences and armament. The Travellers may not relish the idea and might reason that since the Citadel will not arrive for some years they can just slink away. There is nothing the local factions can do about this but they will certainly not help the Travellers cross the Great Rift. Whether the Travellers choose to lead the assault or are bribed, begged or browbeaten into it, this is something they need to do in order to obtain assistance in making the crossing.

Deepnight Revelation can accelerate to intercept velocity in around 160 hours, jump to the Citadel's projected location, and back again, then decelerate again taking another 160 hours or so. She has the fuel reserves to do so and can carry local troops or small craft. There will be no shortage of volunteers from members of all three factions present at Claimed-in-Hope and if additional ships come these might also make a contribution.

Once *Deepnight Revelation* has begun her acceleration she is committed. It will take just as long to slow down again as to reach intercept speed, so whatever preparations the Travellers want to make need to be thought out in advance and completed before the acceleration starts. The course calculations are complex and will require a couple of days of simulation, planning and correction before the scientific and astrogation staff are satisfied.

Calculating a jump emergence point close to the Citadel with the correct vector to allow an intercept is a complex task but one the Mission Division can handle given a few days and good navigational data. If the Travellers choose to use a gravitational slingshot manoeuvre in order to shave time off the acceleration phase they will need to make a Difficult (10+) Astrogation check. Acceleration time can be reduced by D3% for every point of Effect.

If the Travellers take along ground troops from one or more factions, these will need to be accommodated and supplied for the duration of the mission. Training should also be provided if possible, using *Deepnight Revelation's* facilities. There is a limit to what can be achieved during the acceleration and jump but the Travellers know far more about this sort of operation – if only from their tactical databases – than the locals.

The preparation phase could be one of the most memorable parts of the entire campaign if the Referee plays it well. People from multiple species training together, sharing meals in the mess and demonstrating their own unique combat techniques; boarding action drills followed by swapping tall tales that transcend species barriers. Despite the fact that the force is going into an unknown situation there could be a real feeling of camaraderie if the Travellers manage the situation

well. On the other hand, there is a chance that being in close confines might exacerbate differences between the factions and cause a breakdown in relations.

It is not possible for the Travellers to plan the action in specific detail but there are many general preparations that can be made. If the Travellers make no real attempt to weld their allies into a cohesive force, no benefits are gained from this period. If they choose to roleplay some means of raising morale, encouraging cooperation or building confidence in one another, they can gain one or both of the following bonuses.

Tactical Bonus: A successful Average (8+) Tactics (military) check ensures the assault force has a basic grasp of boarding tactics and its component parts can be relied upon to at least know what they are trying to do. All components gain DM+1 on the Assault Resolution table on page 106.

Leadership Bonus: A successful Difficult (10+) Leadership check encourages fighting spirit and a willingness to trust one another. This translates to DM+1 on force morale checks for all units. Troops that might have fallen back from a bad situation may instead hang on, sure in the knowledge that allies are coming to their assistance.

The Travellers can make as much or as little of the preparation period as they please. They have a little less than a week during the acceleration phase and a week in jump to do whatever they have in mind. Once the jump is initiated they are committed; unless the course calculations are off, their ship will emerge close to the Citadel and battle will almost certainly be joined.

INTERCEPT

Deepnight Revelation's jump plot was calculated to place her slightly ahead of the Citadel, along its interstellar vector. Ship and planetoid have more or less matching velocity but *Deepnight Revelation* has a huge advantage. Her Deep Space Manoeuvring System (DSMS) allows her to make relatively high-g manoeuvres even in almost completely empty space. A ship without a DSMS would suffer enormously reduced manoeuvring capability but *Deepnight Revelation* is in a position to evade, open or close range, and even break off the engagement entirely if the Travellers so choose.

The Citadel does not immediately attack the Travellers' vessel or vessels. This may surprise the Travellers if they do not comprehend the Citadels' programming but the reason is very simple. Unless *Deepnight Revelation* demonstrates herself to be a threat to the Citadel (or the Erline species, somehow) the Citadel's self-

defence protocols are not engaged. It will be triggered by manoeuvres it recognises as combat-related or by a close approach, and will certainly attack if the Travellers attempt to land on its planetoid surface.

A scan will not trigger a hostile response. Indeed, the Citadel will carry out its own scans of *Deepnight Revelation* and begin evaluating them. Its programming is simplistic in many ways, meaning it is likely to interpret the sudden appearance, of what is obviously a starship, as a potential but not proven threat. Whilst the probability of a ship jumping in right in its path is very low, it does not quite cross the threshold for immediate attack. However, the Citadel will move to a state of hair trigger readiness.

A scan of the Citadel indicates it is a large body with high metallic content. This confuses sensors to a great extent and makes internal scans inconclusive. What is apparent is that there are multiple internal voids, some of which appear to have powered systems within, and there are also what can only be surface installations for weaponry.

It is obvious from an initial scan that the planetoid cannot be attacked in the manner of a starship – there is simply too much of it. Instead, it will be necessary to suppress its weapons and force entry through the remains of the weapons bays. These resemble planetside bunkers more than a ship's weapon mounts and are hopefully connected to the Citadel's critical systems. It is not possible to tell for sure from a remote scan.

THE CITADEL

The information that follows can be determined, in general terms at least, from analysis of initial scans. This may make it possible to plan an assault or avoid unexpected setbacks.

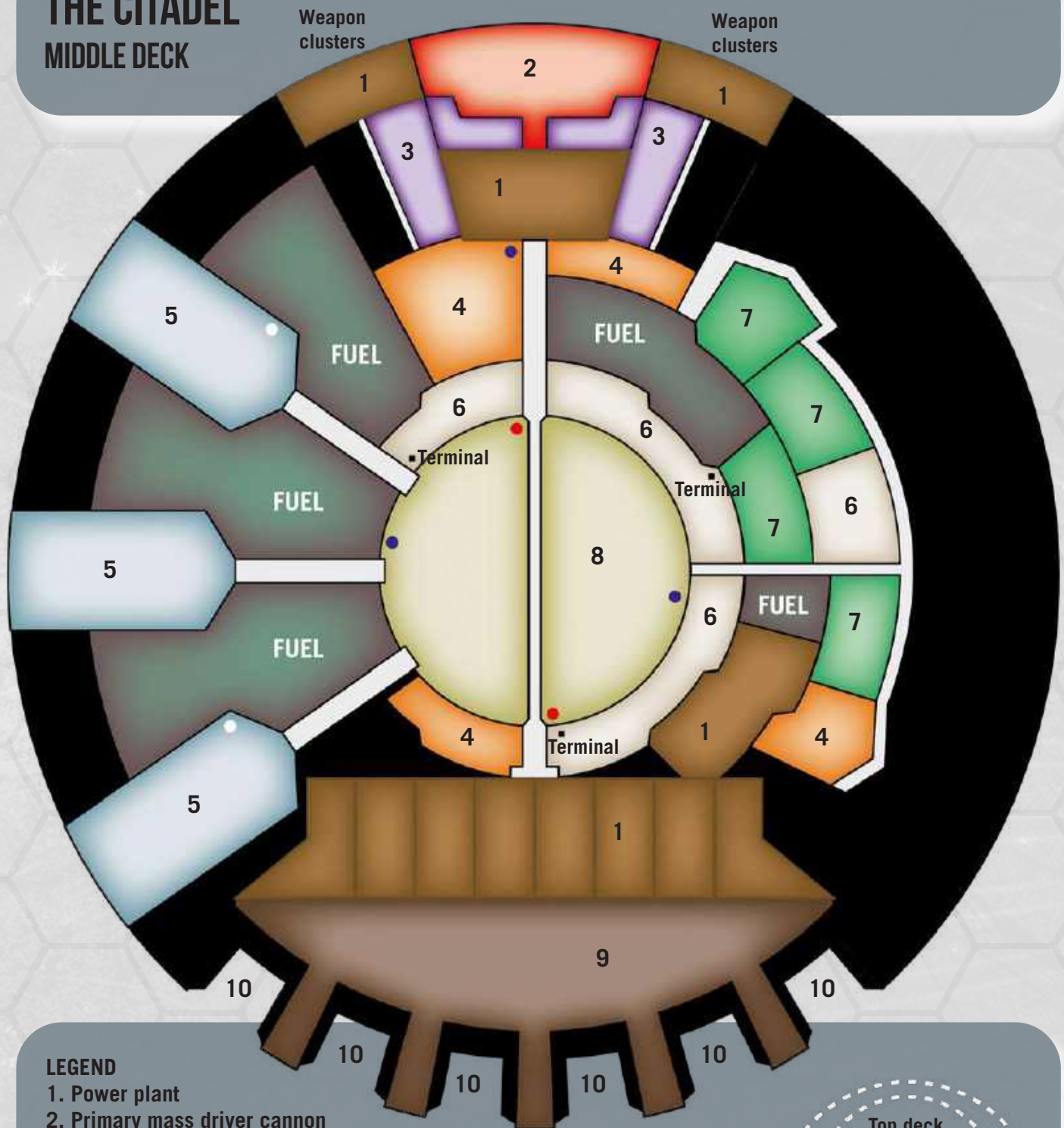
Basic Physical Data

Basic physical data is gathered by a scan with no need for skill or DEI checks. With few details available there is a real possibility for erroneous assumption about the function of a space but the general layout of the planetoid can be discerned if nothing else.

The planetoid is irregular in shape but can be considered an oblate spheroid – much like a very battered and misshapen rugby ball. There is no real concept of 'fore and aft' on a planetoid of this size but since drive emissions have been detected at one end this is an obvious candidate to be considered 'aft'. There appears to be a large concentration of power generation machinery and some kind of ion drive at this end of the planetoid. The drive is deep inside the rock, with long tunnels directly 'aft' and offset to allow angled

THE CITADEL

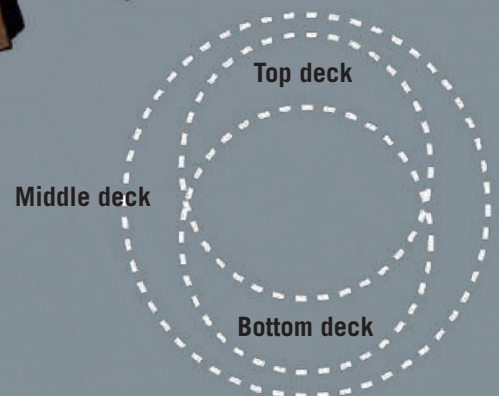
MIDDLE DECK



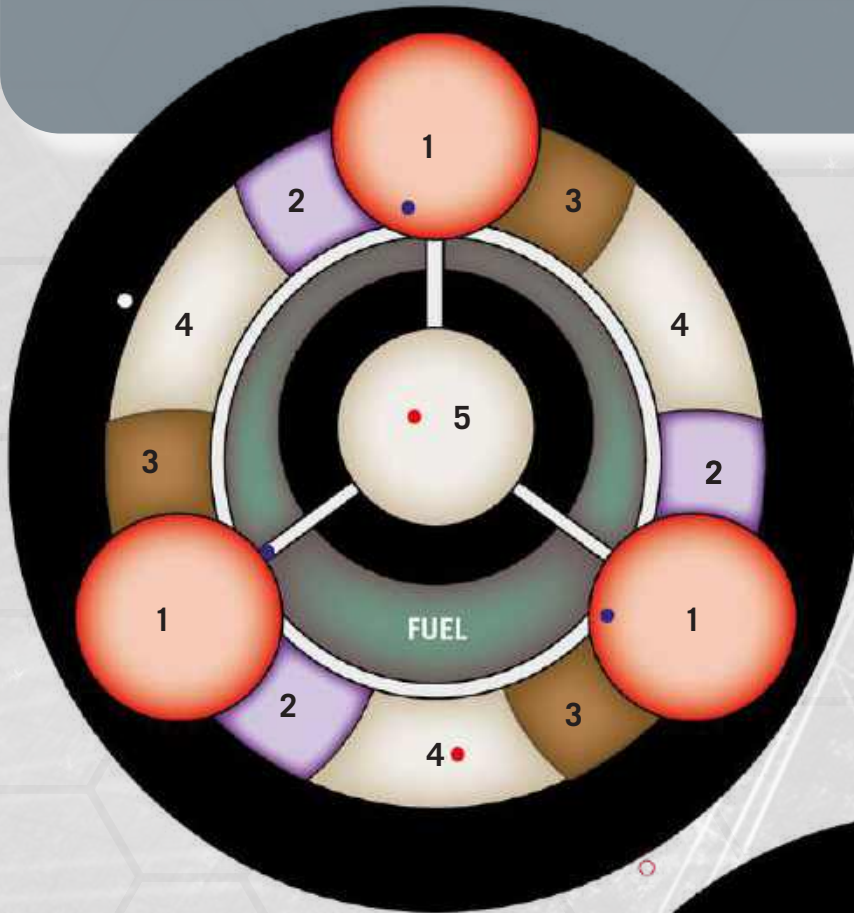
LEGEND

1. Power plant
2. Primary mass driver cannon
3. Ammunition chambers
4. Mobile units chambers
5. Craft bay
6. Computer and electronics systems chambers
7. Workshop
8. Command and control centre
9. Ion drive
10. Exhaust tunnel

- Airlock
- Access to top and bottom decks



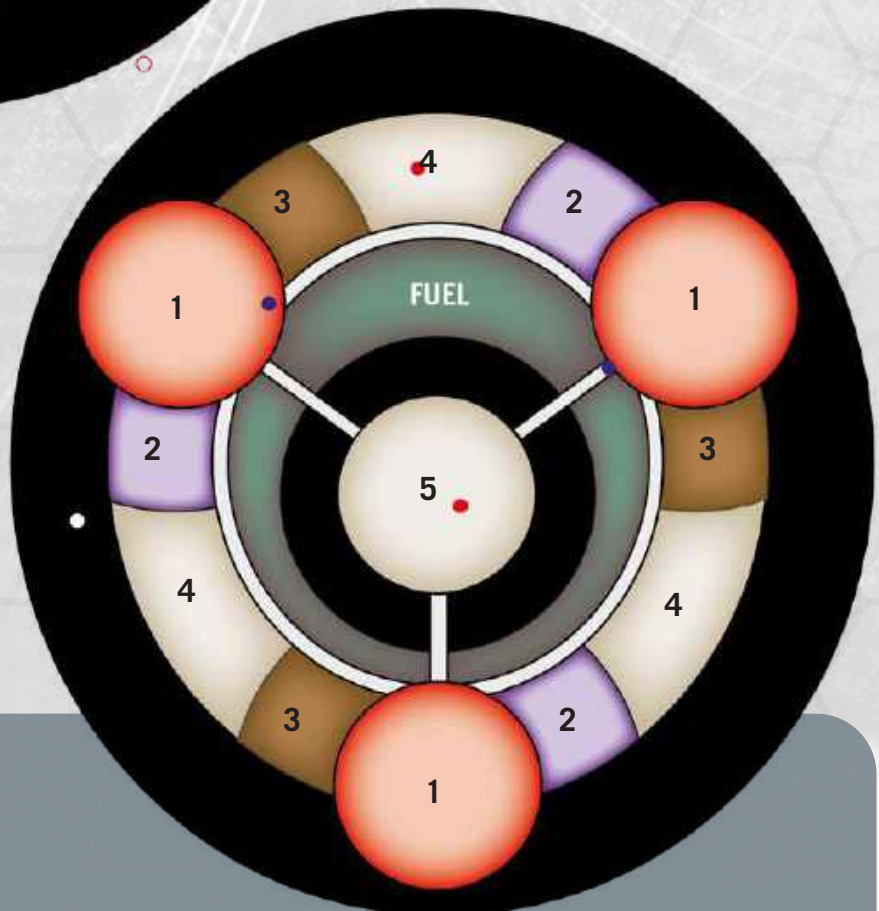
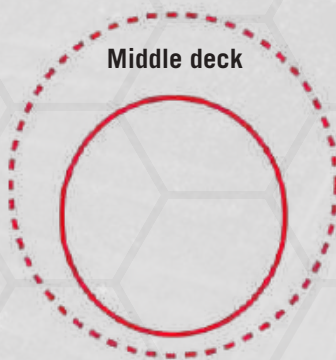
THE CITADEL



TOP DECK

- Airlock
- Access to top and bottom decks

BOTTOM DECK



LEGEND

- 1. Secondary weapon clusters
- 2. Ammunition chamber
- 3. Power plant
- 4. Electronic systems
- 5. Mobile units/storage area

thrust to be applied. The drive is currently not emitting; the Citadel is coasting. Power emissions throughout the planetoid are very low.

There is an obvious large installation or cluster of machinery at the 'fore' end of the planetoid, with its own power generation capability. This is presumed to be a weapons cluster. There are six smaller but similar clusters, each with their own power generation capability, located around the surface of the planetoid. These are grouped as two belts of three at roughly 120-degree intervals, one belt forward of the centre of mass and one aft of it. These are thought to be primarily defensive installations.

There are what appear to be three craft bays located close to the surface at intervals of roughly 60 degrees around the circumference of the planetoid, about midway along its length, with a large space at the centre of the planetoid's mass. This is thought to be the command and control area, plus perhaps additional systems that require as much protection as possible. There are many voids within the planetoid's structure that could be natural but may be fuel storage areas.

General Data

The following information is for the use of the Referee, who may decide to make some or all of it available to the Travellers if they earn it.

The Citadel's critical systems are distributed along its long axis, close to the centre of the centreline, with defensive and offensive installations on the surface. Its configuration keeps the bulk of the planetoid between the most critical systems and any return fire. The primary systems – the drive and its power plant, the command centre and the main weapons installation – are connected by a fore-and-aft shaft with multiple sets of blast doors. Similar shafts connect the three craft bays to the command area. The small surface weapons installations and multiple fuel tanks hollowed out of the rock are connected by much smaller shafts, which carry fuel pipes, power trunking and an accessway large enough for an Erline – and therefore a human – to move along it without much discomfort.

The planetoid was given an enormous fuel capacity by cutting out hollows and lining them with crystalliron. Still, the volume of fuel required for a voyage of centuries' duration was such that the Citadels were expected to decelerate every few decades, entering a star system to send out craft. These would gather fuel and necessary materials, which would be stored in gigantic caverns close to the craft bays. The latter are the closest thing to a structural weakness the planetoid has; a large enough explosion in one of the storage caverns might drive cracks through to another.

Defence of the Citadel

The Citadel will respond to a threat with weapons fire, attempting to destroy an incoming ship. Swarms of Mobile Units may be launched from the craft bays, with smaller groups exiting through maintenance hatches at the weapons installations. If standoff defence is not sufficient, the Citadel will rely on the fire of its lighter weapons and oppose any attempt to board with Mobile Units on the surface or in targeted installations. The defenders will fall back towards the command and drive areas if heavily pressed and will flank around intruders using the surface or small access tunnels. Tactics are not imaginative but operations are well coordinated, with one group of Mobile Units apparently retreating to draw intruders past an access tunnel from where another force can get into their rear.

Command Core

The central area has its own power plant and fuel tanks. It consists of a complex of chambers filled with multiple-redundant computer systems, interspersed with electronics workshops where robotic units build replacement components and storage chambers for materials. In addition to any data that could be recovered, there is a wealth of ready-made electronics equipment and materials for putting it together, which could be of great value to any or all of the factions. The component production robots could be reprogrammed to create one or more ready-made electronics fabrication facilities.

This area will be defended to the last by Mobile Units, which can only be commanded to stand down from one of the manual override terminals. There is one of these in every major computer chamber, for the use of the original programmers or if manual maintenance was ever deemed necessary. The Citadel has kept them in working order just like every other system and does not deem them any more or less important than its other systems.

Drives and Power

The Citadel's drives and main power plant are housed in a set of large interconnected chambers towards its 'aft', with ion drives making use of long tunnels through the rock. All chambers can be sealed off from one another with blast doors and the Citadel can operate at reduced capability with some or even most of its power plants disabled. Most machinery is very large, built in self-contained blocks that could be removed and used as the central power plant of a colony or suitably shaped starship. The main power plant complex will be defended almost as tenaciously as the command centre, with surviving Mobile Units falling back for a final defence at the command complex only if the battle at the power plants is hopeless.

If the ion drive is active, the area immediately behind the Citadel is unhealthy. Any craft approaching from the direction of the ion plume will be automatically hit by the equivalent of a small ion cannon bay. A large vessel such as *Deepnight Revelation* could be affected by all six of the main exhausts each round but a smaller vessel will only be hit by one. The ion plume is not focussed like a weapon, so does not roll to attack – anything directly in its path is affected; anything that is not cannot be targeted. The plume has a short danger distance; full damage is taken out to 100 kilometres and half damage to 250 kilometres. Beyond this distance a craft will suffer hull ionisation and interference with electronic systems but no damage.

Primary Weapons Cluster

The main weapons cluster is a grouping of 10 heavy mass driver cannon bays in a hexagonal rosette – six in the outer ring, then three, then one. Each has a small power plant and access to a set of interconnected ammunition chambers, which normally each serve one bay but can transfer projectiles from one to another at need. If a wrecked mass driver bay were entered, personnel could make their way down the ammunition transfer and maintenance tunnels then across and back up to the surface in the rear of another weapon.

The primary weapons cluster is surrounded by an outer ring of 12 defensive weapons clusters, each consisting of seven light mass driver arrays in a hexagonal arrangement similar to the main weapons. This is a total of 84 light mass driver barbettes, all capable of firing into the Citadel's forward arc. At least three clusters can fire at targets approaching the fore end of the planetoid from any flank. These weapons are fed from a single ammunition chamber under the cluster and would normally conduct defensive fire. The barbettes are not capable of slewing quickly but used as batteries to put clouds of projectiles in the expected path of an incoming vessel.

Each defensive rosette and each heavy mass driver bay has its own dedicated power plant, but all are cross-linked to create redundancy in the event of heavy damage or disruption. Each weapon also has a surface tunnel, normally used for maintenance, which permits Mobile Units to gather on the surface to defend the entry point or leap across to another craft en masse.

Secondary Weapons Clusters

The six secondary weapon clusters located around the periphery of the planetoid each consist of seven light mass driver arrays arranged in a hexagonal rosette. They are more or less identical to the rosettes defending the primary weapons arrays and used in a similar manner.

The positioning of these batteries is such that at least a few barbettes can fire into any arc but there are dead spots due to terrain where a craft close to the surface cannot be targeted at all. The clusters have maintenance/access tunnels like all others and may be used to marshal a force on the surface.

Craft Bays

The three large craft bays also contain reception and processing equipment for resources harvested by the Citadel's craft, as well as maintenance cradles and a marshalling area for Mobile Units. Artificial caverns nearby house fabrication bays where craft and robots are produced from harvested resources. The machinery is built into the cavern floors and walls, and is heavily integrated, but with some ingenuity and a lot of work it could be demounted and repurposed as part of a factory or fabrication ship.

The craft bays are obvious entry points into the Citadel, and will be defended, but not tenaciously. Mobile Units will be pulled back down the corridors to the command chambers rather than sacrificing them to hold at all costs. A likely strategy if the Travellers decide to enter by this route is to put up stiff resistance at first then thin out the defenders, pulling the rest out of the combat zone. As the enemy penetrates into the interior of the Citadel, they will be outflanked and attacked from behind.

DEFEATING THE CITADEL

The Citadel will become hostile if craft approach too close or if fired upon – or there are indications it is about to be. At this point its strategy will be to bring its primary weapons cluster to bear and hurl multiple projectile rounds from its heavy mass driver cannon. Smaller craft will be engaged with the light mass driver arrays. It may be possible to detect swarms of Mobile Units forming up on the surface if the Travellers think to look for them. These will leap onto craft that approach closely or hide in craters on the surface to ambush anyone attempting a landing. Once the Travellers are inside they will be resisted by groups of Mobile Units that may stand their ground or fight a mobile action, depending on circumstances. The Mobile Units are unimaginative in their tactics but they are not stupid.

In order to defeat the Citadel the Travellers need some kind of plan. Just blasting away with the spinal weapon will not suffice as there is simply too much rock to be shifted. Indeed, the particle accelerator will tend to rearrange the features of the planetoid by melting parts of it that then solidify, rather than removing mass. Some is blasted clear and this can be increased by

firing explosive weapons into a molten area but, overall, Travellers who try to slug it out with a large chunk of rock are going to run into trouble.

It is not necessary to play out every detail of the attack on the Citadel. Indeed, some aspects of the battle may become effectively scenery or a backdrop. For example, if the Travellers accept that *Deepnight Revelation* cannot win a sloggish match and order her to evade and deliver harassing fire, this can be assumed to be going on in the background and be narrated rather than resolved in detail. The ship may take the odd hit but as a rule if the Travellers want to benefit from an asset they must risk it.

There are three ways to defeat the Citadel. Capturing its control centres would enable the Travellers to shut down its weapons and gain access to its databases, ultimately allowing the planetoid to be pillaged for equipment useful to all factions as well as the Travellers themselves. If the drives were permanently disabled the Citadel would voyage forever onwards, eventually running out of fuel. It would not be able to enter a star system to refuel or make an attack. Total destruction is also a possibility, although it would be hard to achieve.

Destruction

The only sure way to destroy the planetoid would be to rig very large demolition charges at multiple points within it. The many spaces within create possibilities for a cascading structural failure but this is more akin to a mining expedition than a combat operation. To destroy the planetoid, breaking it into pieces and rendering its systems largely harmless, would require the positioning of around 1,000 megatons of explosives at multiple key points. It is unlikely the Travellers will be able to achieve this against resistance, although it might be possible to plug up access points to the surface and drill down to emplace explosives. How the warheads are to be obtained is an additional problem for the Travellers to solve.

Disabling the Drives

The drives are protected by thick rock, which is pierced by long exhaust tubes. In theory, it might be possible to fire the spinal particle accelerator up these tubes but that would require an incredible feat of precision shooting, repeated six times to take out all main drive clusters. Hitting the tube directly is only feasible from less than a kilometre, and requires a Formidable (14+) Gunner check. Each time an attempt is made, the Referee should make a straight 2D check. On 10+ the Citadel realises what is happening and takes countermeasures. This will happen for certain once a hit is made.

A hit with the spinal weapon will disable a drive cluster. Once this happens, the Citadel will fire up its drives

and use angled thrust to slightly alter its alignment in a random manner. Subsequent shots must be set up by *Deepnight Revelation's* pilot, giving the gunnery officer a fleeting shot down the throat of the Citadel's drives. Setting up the shot requires a Difficult (10+) Pilot check. *Deepnight Revelation* cannot be hit by any of the Citadel's weapons whilst close behind the drive section but a failed Pilot check places her briefly in the firing arc of one of the aft secondary weapons arrays. A swarm of Mobile Units might also be launched against a tailgating ship.

If the ion drive is active, missiles cannot be guided up the drive tubes; the ion plume disrupts their guidance system. The plume also attenuates the particle accelerator, so once it is active the spinal weapon may not automatically take out a drive cluster. If a hit is scored, the Travellers must roll 8+ on 2D to disable the target; otherwise only cosmetic damage is inflicted. Likewise, lesser weapons such as lasers and fusion guns will either be attenuated by the ion plume or lack power to do significant damage.

The ion plume is an unhealthy environment for small craft, as well as missiles, but it dissipates quickly from a tube once a drive cluster is shut down or disabled. Small craft of up to 100 tons could land between the drive tubes and vacc-suited personnel could enter the ship this way. The heavy exploration suits aboard *Deepnight Revelation* might be well suited to this task. Making an assault in this manner requires avoiding the ion plume and risking defensive fire from the secondary weapons clusters, or plunging through the plume and accepting damage caused. Once within one of the drive clusters an assault force can fight its way through to any part of the drives and power plant section, eventually reaching the interconnecting tunnels to the main command chambers.

Tackling the Weapons Clusters

The primary weapon cluster can only fire into a narrow arc directly ahead of the planetoid, around 12 degrees off its main axis. Given how slowly the planetoid slews, any craft under power can stay out of this firing arc. If a vessel does venture there, it will be engaged by the heavy mass driver cannon with multiple projectile ammunition. A hit is not likely but would cause serious damage if it occurred; the prospect should be enough to make the Travellers wary of the forward arc.

The secondary weapon clusters are positioned such that at least some weapons can engage any target that is not directly ahead of or behind the planetoid. The Travellers may decide to suppress one or more of these clusters or even tackle the main battery. Each cluster, and the main battery, is considered to be a separate target. Weapon emplacements are sunk deep into the rock and armoured. Once the Hull points of a cluster are gone, it

is a tangled wreck that can be entered by personnel to access the interior.

Each secondary weapons cluster has 2,500 Hull points and Armour 10. The primary cluster has 1,500 Hull points per large mass driver cannon. The primary weapons array effectively has Armour 20, most of which is provided by thick rock.

In addition to, or instead of, blasting away at a weapon cluster, the Travellers could launch an assault by landing troops on the surface and forcing an entry. This will be resisted by Mobile Units, if the attack is detected, but it may be possible to deceive the defenders by heading for a different entry point then changing the landing spot once the assault craft is too close to be tracked. The Citadel does not have surface sensors, although it can position Mobile Units to act as short ranged observation points.

A weapon cluster can be disabled, rather than destroyed, by gaining access to its control chamber and using the manual maintenance terminal to switch off the weapons. Destroying or shutting down the dedicated power plant will not suffice unless power feeds from the rest of the ship are cut. This can be accomplished by rigging a small demolition charge on the trunking or just blowing a hole in it with a suitable weapon. Once a weapon cluster is down, craft can approach safely from that arc and land unopposed.

Assault Units

The only sure way to take out the Citadel is to make a direct assault and gain control of its core. This can be largely abstracted, with the focus remaining on the Travellers as other groups go about their tasks elsewhere. Depending on the preferences of the Travellers the assault might be a tactical exercise conducted in *Deepnight Revelation's* mission bridge or a first-hand scramble at close quarters... or both.

The first requirement is to create combat units of a suitable size. *Deepnight Revelation* has only a handful of dedicated combat specialists but these can lead teams of less experienced or skilled personnel. There are limits to how many combat teams can be formed without rendering the ship inoperable, and how effective these teams will be depends on their weaponry and experience.

Each assault team will number around 20 personnel. Each faction that contributes to the attack supplies D3 assault teams and *Deepnight Revelation* can create a varying number depending on how thinly the Travellers want to spread their combat experienced personnel. Each assault group has two characteristics: Effectiveness and Status.



Effectiveness is used as a DM used on the Assault Resolution table (on page 106) and for morale checks. Status is a quick indicator of the state the unit is in: Normal, Depleted, Heavy Casualties, Remnant. This has implications for the resolution of the assault and also for the crew in the longer term.

When forming an assault unit, the values on the Assault Units table are totalled, giving an initial Effectiveness. Unit formation is abstracted by assigning 100 points, representing available personnel and weaponry, to as many units as the Travellers want to form.

Assault Units

FACTOR	POINTS COST	EFFECTIVENESS
Tenipal Alliance	—	+0
Sovereigndoms	—	-1
Erline Worlds	—	-3
<i>Deepnight Revelation</i> Crew	—	+0
Mixed Unit	—	-2
Heavy Equipment Assigned	—	+2
Elite Unit	25	+2
Skilled Unit	15	+1
Normal Unit	10	—
Weak Unit	5	-2

There are two sets of Heavy Equipment, representing the heavy hostile environment suits and the plasma weapons. These can be assigned to any group; if both are assigned to the same unit, the total Effectiveness for them is +3.

As noted, each faction contributing to the operation can form D3 units in addition to those paid for by assigning points. The composition of alien units can be amended if the Travellers prefer. For example, if there are three Tenipal and one Sovereigndoms units the Travellers could amalgamate these into four mixed formations. Internal divisions will make these less effective than they might otherwise be, however.

Once units have been formed, they should be named and their data recorded as shown on the Assault Units Roster.

Assault Units Roster

UNIT NAME	STATUS	EFFECTIVENESS	NOTES
Assault Force Alpha	Elite, Normal	+4	Plasma Weapons assigned
Riiknaa's Raiders	Weak, Normal	-2	—
Tenipal Group One	Tenipal, Normal	0	—

Resolving the Assault

Each assault unit must be assigned a target; multiple units can be assigned to the same target but will support one another rather than making separate checks to determine success. Initial targets must be surface access points such as weapons clusters or the docking bay and each combat area is split into two zones – inner and outer. These represent the immediate approaches to the target and the target itself, respectively. In addition, assault units can be assigned to action on the surface of the planetoid.

In order to reach the command core of the Citadel it is necessary to gain control over a surface entry point such as a docking bay or the main weapons cluster by winning the battle there, then make an attack against the core itself. This, too, has an outer and inner zone. Once control is established over the command area, a force from the Erline Worlds can disable the Citadel using manual command overrides. A Traveller can also do so if they make a Difficult (10+) Electronics (computers) check.

The assault is resolved in 30-minute phases, each equivalent to five rounds of starship combat. It is not necessary to resolve the actions of every assault force in each phase; the Referee can assume that some of the assault units are skirmishing, regrouping or are pinned down, keeping part of the enemy force busy but with no chance of advancing towards the ultimate goal. Likewise, it is not necessary to keep track of all the Mobile Units available to the Citadel. Instead, the outcome of firefights and assaults can be abstracted using the system presented here.

Any unit that presses the attack in a given phase must make a resolution check, which may alter the overall strategic balance or just the local situation. A resolution check is made by rolling 2D and adding the unit's Effectiveness, along with any other relevant modifiers. The outcome of the phase is applied to the unit leading the assault and resolution uses that unit's Effectiveness. DM+1 applies for every supporting unit, to a maximum of +3. These units are assumed to supply supporting fire or diversions and do not suffer casualties. The Travellers might choose to use weak units as cannon fodder, preserving their best troops for later, or have skilled personnel lead the assault and accept the casualties they

will incur. The Referee should remember that crew and allies may require an explanation afterwards if they feel they were not fairly treated.

Each area where the Travellers are trying to make progress is termed an Active Combat Location. As noted before, there may be intermittent skirmishing going on elsewhere but the only places where progress can be made are Active Combat Locations. Casualties will be taken in these locations, falling upon the unit leading the assault. This is perhaps not 100% realistic but it reduces the amount of bookkeeping necessary to resolve the attack.

For each resolution check the Travellers should roll 2D, modified by all applicable DMs on the Resolution Check DMs table, before consulting the Assault Resolution table.

If an assault is repulsed, the Travellers' forces are ejected from it and must begin a new attack. For example, if they have captured the outer area of one of the docking bays and are attacking the inner chamber when they are repulsed, the assault force is ejected from the docking

area and must regroup on the surface of the planetoid, fighting for the outer docking area all over again.

Where a DM applies next phase, the Travellers have the option not to press the attack there. Their force is assumed to hold its ground and regroup, eliminating the circumstance that imposed the DM.

Taking Casualties

Each time casualties are taken, a unit reduces its Status one or two levels, for example from Normal to Depleted, imposing a negative DM on subsequent attacks. Each time casualties are taken a morale check is necessary. This is abstracted as an Average (8+) 2D check, with a DM from the Leadership skill of any Traveller in the same location. Success indicates the unit is able to fight on. A negative Effect takes the unit out of action for that number of phases and Effect -6 or worse results in total collapse of morale. That unit cannot take any further part in the assault.

Damaged units can be amalgamated if the Travellers wish. This takes a whole phase in which the unit cannot fight or support another formation. Amalgamating a unit

Resolution Check DMs

FACTOR	DM
Traveller Present	+ Leadership or Tactics skill of unit leader
Supporting units(s)	+1 per extra unit, maximum of +3
Single Active Combat Location	-2
Two Active Combat Locations	—
Three Active Combat Locations	+1
Four or more Active Combat Locations	+2
Attacking via ion drive tubes	+2 on first phase, +1 on second, +0 thereafter
Unit is Depleted	-1
Unit has Heavy Casualties	-3
Unit is a Remnant	-6

Assault Resolution

2D+DMs	OUTCOME
0-	Repulsed with heavy losses. Reduce Status by two levels.
1-2	Repulsed with losses. Reduce Status by one level.
3-4	Inconclusive with casualties taken. Reduce Status by one level.
5-6	Inconclusive with no significant casualties. DM-1 applies to next phase in this location.
7-8	Inconclusive with no significant casualties.
9-10	Inconclusive with no significant casualties. DM+1 applies to next phase in this location.
11-12	Location captured with casualties. Reduce Status by one level.
13-14	Location captured without significant casualties.
15+	Location overrun. DM+2 applies to next phase in all locations. No significant casualties.

normally creates a formation no better than the poorest of those amalgamated – so adding the Remnant of an Elite unit to a Weak unit would normally create a Weak unit with more manpower. However, the Referee may allow Travellers to quickly put together a more effective force if someone with the Leadership skill is on hand. An average of skill levels would be appropriate under such circumstances.

Each level of casualties represents 1D personnel out of action for the duration of the assault. Of these, a third (rounding down) are dead, a third will require medical care for some weeks, but will recover in time, and a third will be fit for duty in D3 days. None are available during the remainder of the assault. These casualty levels are likely to be relevant after the assault, when the Travellers take stock and realise how many of their irreplaceable crewmembers they have lost. A unit that is down to a Remnant and takes additional casualties is

assumed to have been wiped out. This is subject to the 'thirds' rule above; only a third of the unit's personnel are actually dead but they are all out of action.

Unit Casualties

STATUS	TOTAL CASUALTIES
Normal	None
Depleted	1D
Heavy Casualties	1D+6
Remnant	1D+12
Additional Casualties Taken	All

When amalgamating formations, move status back towards Normal by the amount of steps remaining to the smaller formation. Thus, two units with Heavy Casualties can be combined to produce one at Normal status; a Remnant can be added to a Depleted unit to bring it up to Normal and so forth. A unit cannot be taken above Normal.

REFEREE'S NOTES

If the Travellers wish to run the assault from their control room, the procedure is to resolve the action at each Active Combat Area every phase until the inner control area is taken and someone who can shut down the Citadel gets there – or the control systems are taken offline in some more destructive manner. In the latter case, the Mobile Units will fight on in a directionless manner and will have to be mopped up.

Resolution in this manner follows this cycle:

- The Travellers indicate which locations they intend to attack or actively fight for.
- The Travellers indicate what units are to make the attack and which are in support.
- Results are obtained for all Active Combat Areas.
- Any units not engaged this phase can relocate to a different area.
- Units with casualties can be amalgamated ready for action next phase. Amalgamated units can relocate in the same phase.

It is entirely possible to play out the assault in a detached, tactical-command-centre manner. The Travellers can certainly make meaningful decisions that might dictate the course of the battle. For example, coming in through a disabled ion drive exhaust tube will surprise the defenders and allow an attack against the outer region of the power and drives section before

the Citadel can shift its Mobile Units to create a proper defence. Attacking at multiple points will split the defenders; going in through a single access point allows Mobile Units to be massed against the assault – the Referee should remember that the Citadel's defenders are operating on interior lines and can shift forces quicker than the Travellers can move them around the periphery.

The Referee can embellish results thrown up by the Assault Resolution table as much as desired. This is not a dry tactical exercise; it is an assault into an alien environment conducted in microgravity with robotic defenders appearing from unexpected directions and scuttling back into maintenance ducts too small for a person to follow.

If the Travellers get involved personally they will experience this first hand and can lead units to achieve more than otherwise might be expected. The Referee should adjudicate clever plans based on their feasibility and whether they make a good story. For example, the Travellers might order a feint in one area, designed to draw in enemy reinforcements, then hit hard elsewhere. This is more imaginative and shows more immersion than merely indicating where attacks are to be made so should be viewed favourably by the Referee. A successful Tactics or Leadership check should grant DM+1 or +2 and perhaps more for a truly exceptional plan.

Similarly, grand gestures that make a good story are worthy of bonuses on the Assault Resolution table or just possibly – at the Referee's discretion – an automatic victory in that area. It may be that the decisive moment in the battle is when *Deepnight Revelation's* captain, armed only with a revolver, marches through a band of wavering assault troops and begins a solo assault that somehow becomes a headlong charge by the entire force. Of course, anyone putting themselves in the front line will be attacked by Mobile Units and could be killed – assets that are used are risked!

It may also be that a clever stratagem allows the Travellers to bypass the whole assault resolution system or use it as a distraction. If a small team worms its way through the maintenance ducts to reach the command core, it could shut down the whole defence. However, this is a very risky operation and there will certainly be encounters with the defenders.

Overall, the Referee should reward drama and effective tactics. If the Travellers just plug away as if their personnel are counters on a board, they can win that way but the Citadel assault will be far more memorable if the Referee and Travellers bring it to life. The battle is won when the Citadel cannot threaten Claimed-in-Hope any more, which means there are varying degrees of victory available. Destroying the ion drives with demolition charges and retiring is a victory. It may seem anticlimactic but it will probably be won at less cost than storming the control area. Similarly, an

incredible end-run by a handful of personnel to reach the command centre and shut down the defences is just as much of a victory as a methodical assault that clears every chamber on the way.

How the Travellers defeat the Citadel can vary considerably; what is important is that they do. Getting control of intact equipment and data cores will grant much greater benefits than simply disabling the drives and could be viewed as the indicator of total victory, although the potential benefits might not be immediately apparent. Once the Travellers conduct an audit of what remains intact aboard the Citadel they should begin to realise how valuable a prize they have gained. Some of the machinery is directly useful to the Travellers; all of it would be beneficial to any of the factions and could be traded for information the Travellers need. Of course, distribution needs to be seen to be fair. A faction that lost people in the assault will expect a share of the spoils.

It is likely that securing what is left of the Citadel and stripping what can be salvaged could take some time. If the Travellers decide not to do this they will have to go through the whole accelerate-and-jump cycle again. Either way, *Deepnight Revelation* returns to find everyone waiting anxiously for news. Once it is clear the threat has been eliminated the colony explodes into celebration. The Travellers and those who took part in the assault are the heroes of the hour and there is a real opportunity to forge a more lasting alliance whilst the mood of cooperation and celebration lasts.



AFTERMATH

Once the Citadel is disabled the Travellers will have eliminated the most imminent threat but there are an unknown number of other Citadels in the region. It may be that the Travellers choose to stay around for a while to help out or guide the local factions towards a lasting alliance. If the Travellers managed to persuade all three factions to take part in the Citadel attack and everyone made a credible effort, the beginnings of an alliance will have been forged. Even if not, the threat of the Citadels could be a unifying factor in local politics for many years to come.

Hunting down all the Citadels and destroying them or rendering them harmless is in everyone's interests. There are no guarantees that old divisions will not reappear, nor that an unscrupulous leader might prefer to co-opt a Citadel rather than eliminate it and share the spoils. The times ahead for the NSY-S region are troubled but the more the Travellers do to promote unity of action now, the greater the chances the factions have of emerging as friends.

It may be that the Travellers move on without really considering what they have done here but Mission Division has a habit of projecting outcomes over the short and longer term. They can put together a presentation for the Travellers suggesting what the final outcome may be. There is always a chance that the whole thing might crash and burn but assuming the factions have worked together to mutual benefit the chances are good they will continue to do so.

The prognosis, assuming all three factions took part in the Citadel attack and the situation on Claimed-in-Hope was resolved reasonably well, is that the colony will become a diplomatic and cultural interchange point. The Erline are likely to be offered their own autonomous region on the planet, which will someday be the capital of an interstellar alliance.

The projection is not entirely rosy. It is likely that some of the Sovereigndoms will resist the rise of an alliance, either remaining outside it or engaging in actions that ultimately require them to be pacified. The worst case scenario is the use of reprogrammed Citadels to destroy opposition, although it is not deemed likely. As for the

Citadels, it will take a long time to track them all down, although each will yield machinery that can be used to jumpstart the economy of a new colony.

The most likely outcome of a joint operation is an alliance that eventually manages to eliminate the Citadels and is aware of the Deepnight Entity, at least in general terms. This alliance will possess jump-2 capability courtesy of the Erline and advanced mineral extraction and processing technology from the Citadels. Expansion across the region is certain, creating a major power within a few centuries. Perhaps someday this alliance will send a mission to Charted Space.

If the Travellers could not achieve close cooperation, this outcome is still possible in the longer term, although there will be more internal struggles and a real risk the alliance will fall apart. If that happens, war is not necessarily inevitable but expansion will be slower and conflict on some scale is highly likely. The most probable outcome of this scenario is eventual domination of the region by the Erline Worlds, with the Tenipal as a secondary power and the Sovereigndoms as minor independents if they are not absorbed by the Erline.

Overall, however, the Travellers have probably advanced the cause of interstellar cooperation and civilisation by their actions here. If subsequent events play out as expected, one or all of the factions in the NSY-S region will emerge onto the galactic stage sooner or later. It may be that in 500 years, or a 1,000, the legend of *Deepnight Revelation* will stand at the heart of history. How they are remembered does not depend entirely upon the actions of the Travellers; the perceptions of those affected may differ. Yet the Travellers can hope that long after they leave their battle with the Citadel will be remembered and their deeds honoured.

The Deepnight Expedition will leave a trail from Charted Space to Terminus Point and, perhaps, beyond. The Travellers may never learn of the legacy they create but their actions have affected the development of entire cultures. In the more immediate sense, they will also gain significant benefits from the defeat of the Citadel.

ACTIONABLE INTELLIGENCE

It will take some time to decipher and digest information gained from the Citadel but with the Travellers' help the time frame is days and weeks rather than years. Some of the information is straightforward and simple, such as the location of the original Citadel in the Erline home system. Technical data will take much longer to fully implement.

The Citadels: The Travellers and their allies gain proof of the origins of the Citadels and the location of the original one almost immediately. A Typical, Average research project further reveals the Citadels' communications protocols. This allows interrogation of any Citadel providing its cyber-security programming can be overcome, or the detailed examination of any captured electronic device at the programming level. The number of Citadels is only known to the original and likewise their intended targets can only be learned from it. A Lengthy, Difficult research project once the first is complete allows electronic interference with the other Citadels. This permits any Citadel other than the original one to be sent a 'friendly, safe' signal, which will cause it to leave the intended target alone. Some Citadels may alter their trajectory to head for another suspected target; others will enter orbit and take up a defensive stance over the target world. This may cause consternation and will need to be resolved in the long term but in the meantime the Citadel will follow its programming to protect the target world.

The Original Infestation: Once the Travellers are able to decode the Citadels' databases they can learn about the infestation that triggered the Citadels' malfunction. The pattern was familiar; a long range (for the time) expedition found a rogue asteroid drifting through the periphery of a star system and took samples of organic matter clinging to it. The infestation took hold before the scout ship could reach its home port and the crew of a rescue vessel were then infected. As infestation spread, the original Citadel implemented its orders to protect the Erline at the species level, coldly deciding to cut away the infection to save healthy colonies.

With no protocol in place to determine which colonies were infected, all the Citadel could do was build a projection of which worlds were likely to come into contact with infected ships and launch attacks against them as soon as it could. The fact that this would take several centuries might have discouraged organic creatures but to the Citadels it was the only option and therefore had to be attempted.

The Citadels do not know a great deal about the Deepnight Entity. Concepts like manner of infection and spread rates were of no real interest to them; they calculated that total infestation of a planet was inevitable once infection spread beyond a certain radius or number of infectees. This was all they needed to formulate their strategy so the rest of the data was simply filed.

This data might be highly useful to the Travellers or anyone else who has to deal with the Deepnight Entity. It is in raw form; spread rates and some accounts of attempts to contain outbreaks. A Lengthy, Average research project will yield considerable information on attempts to treat the infestation using Erline pharmaceuticals. If the Travellers can gain access to a full database on current Erline medicine they can undertake a Long Term, Difficult research project to combine this information with their own attempts to create a counteragent. This will create a basic counteragent, if the Travellers do not already have one, and advances their work by one stage, so a stage 1 counteragent will advance to stage 2. It is not possible to advance beyond stage 3 but a counteragent of that potency grants near total immunity to infestation so long as treatment is continued.

THE CROSSING POINT

If the Travellers provided significant help – however things played out – the Erline Worlds will provide them with information on a possible crossing point. They have observed the Great Rift for centuries and are aware of a chain of stars that appear to have planets. The problem is reaching the first of them and the Erline are willing to help with that. They are willing to re-task many of their ships, jumping out into the Great Rift to laboriously construct a deep space refuelling point. Doing this with jump-2 capable ships means building refuelling points to reach the refuelling points... the Mission Division team can show the Travellers just what a prodigious project this is for the local powers. Yet they are willing if it will help the Travellers on their way. After all, the Travellers have not only defeated the Citadel threat, they have shown the Erline how to find their lost homeworld and perhaps establish the beginnings of an interstellar alliance.

If things did not go all that well, the Referee may allow the Travellers to locate a deep space comet where they can refuel, making it possible to continue along the projected path of the campaign. This should be a last resort, however. A way across the Great Rift is the payoff for this adventure and ideally the Travellers should

look back on their voyage and realise they earned the assistance of the local factions by helping them and thus found a solution to their own problems.

LEAVING THE NEAR SIDE OF YONDER

Finally, it will be time to leave the NSY-S region. It is possible for the Travellers to simply meander onwards or scuttle away with their metaphorical tails between their legs. However, if the Travellers have tried to do right and played fair by the local factions, their departure will be a sad occasion for everyone concerned.

It is a long voyage to the edge of the Great Rift for a Tenipal or Sovereigndom ship but a handful will be there if the Travellers have won their friendship. The Erline Worlds have a few more vessels at the departure point. There are diplomatic parties from each of the factions that came to regard the Travellers warmly and although their gifts are not valuable in the piles-of-Credits sense, they are heartfelt.

There may be a banner, depicting *Deepnight Revelation* and the emblems of the three factions, to hang in the ship's museum. There may be last minute gifts of food and drink, jewellery containing precious stones or fragments of circuit boards from a Citadel. And, if the Travellers solved the problem of Claimed-in-Hope, there may be a small box containing soil from that world.

One way or another, it is time to go. *Deepnight Revelation* must voyage onward towards Terminus Point. Whether she leaves behind chaos or a new era of endeavour and hope, she has played a part in shaping three civilisations... or perhaps the one that will emerge from them. Now there is a final jump plot to be laid in; a week to the deep space refuelling point and then the crossing of the Great Rift can begin.

FURTHER ADVENTURES

As with *The Riftsedge Transit*, it is beyond the scope of this book to detail all the possible adventures the Travellers might or might not have in *The Near Side of Yonder*. There are many systems to explore and many reasons to do so. The local factions might want to involve the Travellers in their powerplays or commission just one more survey expedition. The Travellers themselves may want to stay.

The Referee should allow the Travellers to indulge themselves for a while if they want. The admiration of three interstellar powers may be an intangible reward but is one to be relished all the same. Who doesn't like to see statues of themselves outside the world government headquarters? There is, however, a mission to complete. If the Travellers have done well in *The Near Side of Yonder* they will begin the crossing rested, refreshed and in a positive frame of mind. That may be just as well, for they are now further from Charted Space than any Imperial expedition has ever voyaged and so far from home that there are no further record buoy drop off points.

The planned follow-up missions stop at this region, so from the moment they enter the Great Rift the Travellers are truly on their own.

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TRAVELLER

DEEPNIGHT REVELATION
THE NEAR SIDE OF YONDER

The Near Side of Yonder

Far beyond Charted Space, the expedition seeks a way to cross the Great Rift. Failure will add years to the voyage. *Deepnight Revelation* enters a region populated by three starfaring powers. They might have information useful to the expedition, but each has an agenda. *Deepnight Revelation* is a technological wonder to these cultures, and is sufficient to tip the balance of power.

Forging An Alliance

The people of the Near Side of Yonder face annihilation by an enemy of their own making. They cannot survive alone, but their history of rivalry and conflict makes concerted action impossible. The Travellers could forge an alliance and lead the three societies in a battle for survival... or they could abandon them to their fate.

The Near Side of Yonder. Gunboat diplomacy among distant stars.



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